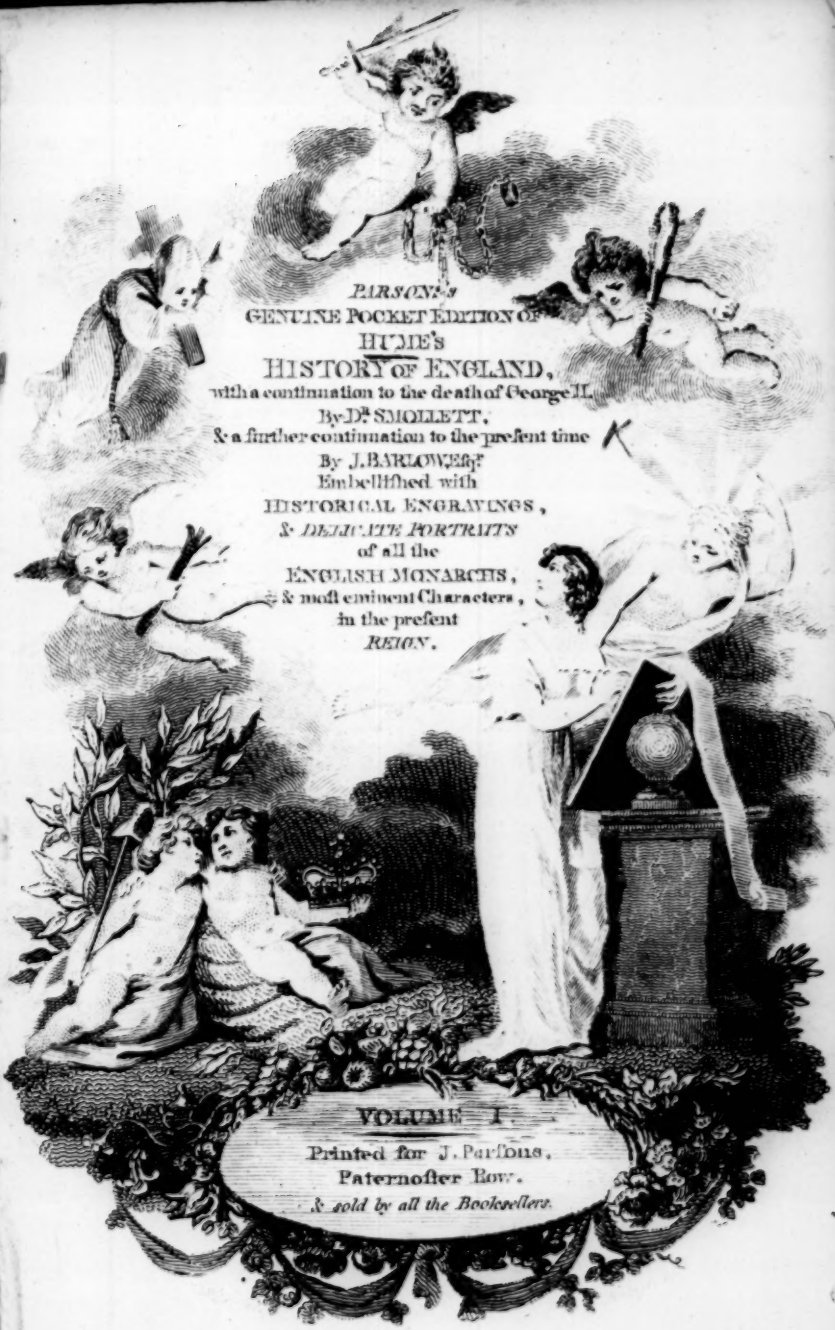

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THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE INVASION OF JULIUS CÆSAR TO *The* REVOLUTION *in* 1688.

By DAVID HUME, Esq.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

VOL. I.

London:
PRINTED FOR J. PARSONS,
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1793.

BRITISH
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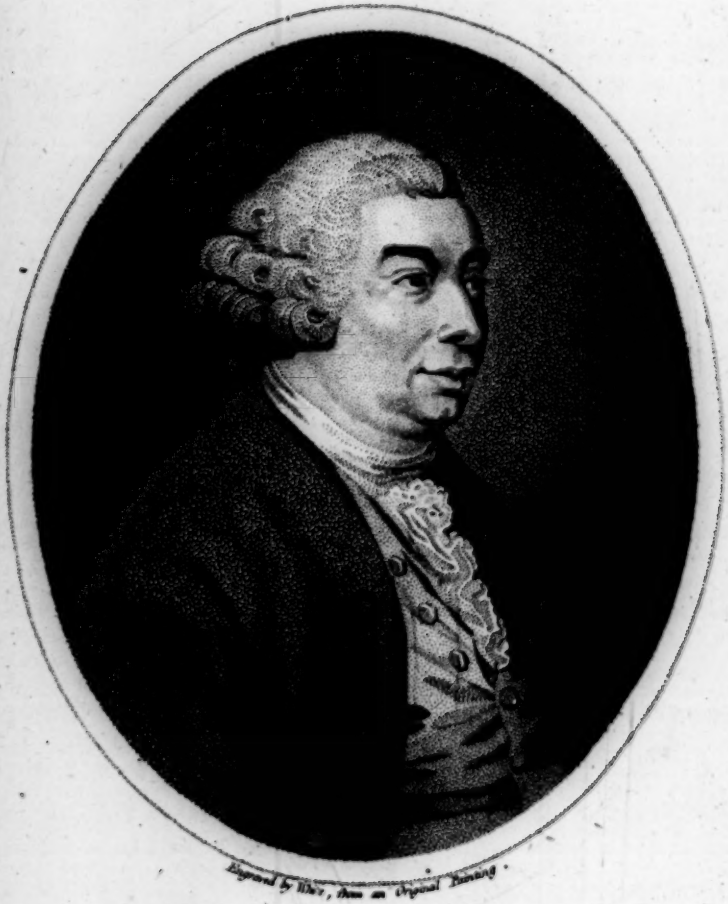

Engraved by Blair, from an Original Painting

David Hume, Esq.

THE LIFE

OF

DAVID HUME, Esq.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

IT is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore I shall be short. It may be thought an instance of vanity that I pretend at all to write my life; but this Narrative shall contain little more than the History of my Writings; as, indeed, almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations. The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity.

I was born the 26th of April 1711, old style, at Edinburgh. I was of a good family, both by father and mother: My father's family is a branch of the Earl of Home's, or Hume's; and my ancestors had been proprietors of the estate which my brother possesses for several generations. My mother was daughter of Sir David Falconer, President of the College of Justice: The title of Lord Halkerton came by succession to her brother.

My family, however, was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts,

died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a ſiſter, under the care of our mother, a woman of ſingular merit, who, though young and handſome, devoted herſelf entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I paſſed through the ordinary courſe of education with ſucceſs, and was ſeized very early with a paſſion for literature, which has been the ruling paſſion of my life, and the great ſource of my enjoyments. My ſtudious diſpoſition, my ſobriety, and my induſtry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profeſſion for me; but I found an unſurmountable averſion to every thing but the purſuits of philoſophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was ſecretly devouring.

My very ſlender fortune, however, being unſuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active ſcene of life. In 1734 I went to Briſtol, with ſome recommendations to eminent merchants; but in a few months found that ſcene totally unſuitable to me. I went over to France, with a view of proſecuting my ſtudies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life which I have ſteadily and ſucceſsfully purſued. I reſolved to make a very rigid frugality ſupply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature.

During my retreat in France, firſt at Rheims, but chiefly at La Fleche, in Anjou, I compoſed my

my *Treatiſe of Human Nature*. After paſſing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737. In the end of 1738, I publiſhed my Treatiſe, and immediately went down to my mother and my brother, who lived at his country-houſe, and was employed himſelf very judiciouſly and ſucceſsfully in the improvement of his fortune.

Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatiſe of Human Nature. It fell *dead-born from the preſs*, without reaching ſuch diſtinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots. But being naturally of a cheerful and ſanguine temper, I very ſoon recovered the blow, and proſecuted with great ardour my ſtudies in the country. In 1742 I printed at Edinburgh the firſt part of my Eſſays: The work was favourably received, and ſoon made me entirely forget my former diſappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in that time recovered the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth.

In 1745 I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England; I found alſo, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were deſirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the ſtate of his mind and health required it.—I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a conſiderable acceſſion to my ſmall fortune. I then received an invitation from General St. Clair to attend him as a ſecretary to his expedition, which was at firſt meant againſt Canada, but ended in an incurſion on the coaſt of France. Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation

from the General to attend him in the ſame ſtation in his military embaſſy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at theſe courts as aid-de-camp to the General, along with Sir Harry Erſkine and Captain Grant, now General Grant. Theſe two years were almoſt the only interruptions which my ſtudies have received during the courſe of my life: I paſſed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though moſt of my friends were inclined to ſmile when I ſaid ſo: In ſhort, I was now maſter of near a thouſand pounds.

I had always entertained a notion, that my want of ſucceſs in publiſhing the Treatiſe of Human Nature, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very uſual indiſcretion, in going to the preſs too early. I therefore caſt the firſt part of the work anew in the Enquiry concerning Human Underſtanding, which was publiſhed while I was at Turin. But this piece was at firſt little more ſucceſsful than the Treatiſe of Human Nature. On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton's Free Enquiry, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition, which had been publiſhed at London, of my Eſſays, Moral and Political, met not with a much better reception.

Such is the force of natural temper, that theſe diſappointments made little or no impreſſion on me. I went down in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country-houſe, for my mother was now dead. I there compoſed the ſecond part of my Eſſay,

Eſſay, which I called Political Diſcourſes, and alſo my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, which is another part of my Treatiſe that I caſt anew. Meanwhile my bookſeller, A. Millar, informed me that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatiſe) were beginning to be the ſubject of converſation; that the ſale of them was gradually increaſing, and that new editions were demanded. Anſwers by Reverends and Right Reverends came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be eſteemed in good company. However, I had a fixed reſolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to any body; and not being very iraſcible in my temper, I have eaſily kept myſelf clear of all literary ſquabbles. Theſe ſymptoms of a riſing reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more diſpoſed to ſee the favourable than unfavourable ſide of things; a turn of mind which it is more happy to poſſeſs, than to be born to an eſtate of ten thouſand a-year.

In 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true ſcene for a man of letters. In 1752 were publiſhed at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my Political Diſcourſes, the only work of mine that was ſucceſsful on the firſt publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the ſame year was publiſhed at London, my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals; which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that ſubject), is of all my writings, hiſtorical, philoſophical, or literary, incomparably the beſt. It came unnoticed and unobſerved into the world.

In 1752, the faculty of Advocates choſe me their Librarian, an office from which I received little or no

no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the Hiſtory of England; but being frightened with the notion of continuing a narrative through a period of 1700 years, I commenced with the acceſſion of the houſe of Stuart, an epoch when I thought the miſrepreſentations of faction began chiefly to take place. I was, I own, ſanguine in my expectations of the ſucceſs of this work. I thought that I was the only hiſtorian that had at once neglected preſent power, intereſt, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the ſubject was ſuited to every capacity, I expected proportional applauſe. But miſerable was my diſappointment: I was aſſailed by one cry of reproach, diſapprobation, and even deteſtation; Engliſh, Scotch, and Iriſh, Whig and Tory, churchman and ſectary, freethinker and religioniſt, patriot and courtier, united in their rage againſt the man who had preſumed to ſhed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the earl of Strafford; and, after the firſt ebullitions of their fury were over, what was ſtill more mortifying, the book ſeemed to ſink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he ſold only forty-five copies of it. I ſcarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, conſiderable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I muſt only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which ſeem two o ld exceptions. Theſe dignified prelates ſeparately ſent me meſſages not to be diſcouraged.

I was, however, I confeſs, diſcouraged; and had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to ſome provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed

my

my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this ſcheme was not now practicable, and the ſubſequent volume was conſiderably advanced, I reſolved to pick up courage and to perſevere.

In this interval, I publiſhed at London my Natural Hiſtory of Religion, along with ſome other ſmall pieces: Its public entry was rather obſcure, except only that Dr. Hurd wrote a pamphlet againſt it, with all the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and ſcurrility, which diſtinguiſh the Warburtonian ſchool. This pamphlet gave me ſome conſolation for the otherwiſe indifferent reception of my performance.

In 1756, two years after the fall of the firſt volume, was publiſhed the ſecond volume of my Hiſtory, containing the period from the death of Charles I. till the Revolution. This performance happened to give leſs diſpleaſure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only roſe itſelf, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother.

But though I had been taught by experience, that the Whig party were in poſſeſſion of beſtowing all places, both in the ſtate and in literature, I was ſo little inclined to yield to their ſenſeleſs clamour, that in above a hundred alterations, which farther ſtudy, reading, or reflection engaged me to make in the reigns of the two firſt Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory ſide. It is ridiculous to conſider the Engliſh conſtitution before that period as a regular plan of liberty.

In 1759, I publiſhed my Hiſtory of the Houſe of Tudor. The clamour againſt this performance was almoſt equal to that againſt the Hiſtory of the

two

two firſt Stuarts. The reign of Elizabeth was particularly obnoxious. But I was now callous againſt the impreſſions of public folly, and continued very peaceably and contentedly in my retreat at Edinburgh, to finiſh, in two volumes, the more early part of the Engliſh Hiſtory, which I gave to the public in 1761, with tolerable, and but tolerable, ſucceſs.

But, notwithſtanding this variety of winds and ſeaſons to which my writings had been expoſed, they had ſtill been making ſuch advances, that the copy-money given me by the bookſellers much exceeded any thing formerly known in England; I was become not only independent, but opulent. I retired to my native country of Scotland, determined never more to ſet my foot out of it; and retaining the ſatisfaction of never having preferred a requeſt to one great man, or even making advances of friendſhip to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of paſſing all the reſt of my life in this philoſophical manner, when I received, in 1763, an invitation from the Earl of Hertford, with whom I was not in the leaſt acquainted, to attend him on his embaſſy to Paris, with a near proſpect of being appointed ſecretary to the embaſſy; and, in the meanwhile, of performing the functions of that office. This offer, however inviting, I at firſt declined, both becauſe I was reluctant to begin connections with the great, and becauſe I was afraid that the civilities and gay company of Paris would prove diſagreeable to a perſon of my age and humour: But on his Lordſhip's repeating the invitation, I accepted of it. I have every reaſon, both of pleaſure and intereſt, to think myſelf happy in my connections with that nobleman,

nobleman, as well as afterwards with his brother General Conway.

Thoſe who have not ſeen the ſtrange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and ſtations. The more I reſiled from their exceſſive civilities, the more I was loaded with them. There is, however, a real ſatisfaction in living at Paris, from the great number of ſenſible, knowing, and polite company with which that city abounds above all places in the univerſe. I thought once of ſettling there for life.

I was appointed ſecretary to the embaſſy; and, in ſummer 1765, Lord Hertford left me, being appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I was *Chargé des Affaires* till the arrival of the Duke of Richmond, towards the end of the year. In the beginning of 1776, I left Paris, and next ſummer went to Edinburgh, with the ſame view as formerly, of burying myſelf in a philoſophical retreat. I returned to that place, not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income, by means of Lord Hertford's friendſhip, than I left it; and I was deſirous of trying what ſuperfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency. But in 1767 I received from Mr. Conway an invitation to be under-ſecretary; and this invitation, both the character of the perſon, and my connexions with Lord Hertford, prevented me from declining. I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I poſſeſſed a revenue of 1000l. a-year), healthy, and though ſomewhat ſtricken in years, with the proſpect of enjoying long my eaſe, and of ſeeing the increaſe of my reputation.

In ſpring, 1775, I was ſtruck with a diſorder in my bowels, which at firſt gave me no alarm, but has ſince, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a ſpeedy diſſolution. I have ſuffered very little pain from my diſorder; and what is more ſtrange, have, notwithſtanding the great decline of my perſon, never ſuffered a moment's abatement of my ſpirits; inſomuch that, were I to name a period of my life which I ſhould moſt chuſe to paſs over again, I might be tempted to point to this later period. I poſſeſs the ſame ardour as ever in ſtudy, and the ſame gaiety in company. I conſider, beſides, that a man of ſixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I ſee many ſymptoms of my literary reputation's breaking out at laſt with additional luſtre, I know that I can have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at preſent.

To conclude hiſtorically with my own character: I am, or rather was (for that is the ſtyle I muſt now uſe in ſpeaking of myſelf, which emboldens me the more to ſpeak my ſentiments); I was, I ſay, a man of mild diſpoſition, of command of temper, of an open, ſocial, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little ſuſceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my paſſions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling paſſion, never ſoured my temper, notwithſtanding my frequent diſappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careleſs, as well as to the ſtudious and literary; and as I took a particular pleaſure in the company of modeſt women, I had no reaſon to be diſpleaſed with the reception I met

with from them. In a word, though moſt men, anywiſe eminent, have found reaſon to complain of calumny, I never was touched or even attacked by her baleful tooth; and though I wantonly expoſed myſelf to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they ſeemed to be diſarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occaſion to vindicate any one circumſtance of my character and conduct: Not but that the zealots, we may well ſuppoſe, would have been glad to invent and propagate any ſtory to my diſadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot ſay there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myſelf, but I hope it is not a miſplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is eaſily cleared and aſcertained.

April 18, 1776.

LETTER

FROM

ADAM SMITH, L.L.D.

TO

WILLIAM STRAHAN, Esq.

DEAR SIR, Kirkaldy, Fifeshire, Nov. 9, 1776.

IT is with a real, though a very melancholy pleasure, that I sit down to give you some account of the behaviour of our late excellent friend, Mr. Hume, during his last illness.

Though in his own judgment his disease was mortal and incurable, yet he allowed himself to be prevailed upon, by the entreaty of his friends, to try what might be the effects of a long journey. A few days before he set out, he wrote that account of his own life, which, together with his other papers, he has left to your care. My account, therefore, shall begin where his ends.

He set out for London towards the end of April, and at Morpeth met with Mr. John Home and myself, who had both come down from London on purpose to see him, expecting to have found him at Edinburgh. Mr. Home returned with him, and attended him during the whole of his stay in England, with that care and attention which might be expected from a temper so perfectly friendly and affectionate. As I had written to my mother that she might expect me in Scotland, I was under the necessity of continuing my journey. His disease seemed to yield to exercise and change of air; and when he arrived in London, he was apparently in much better health than when he left Edinburgh. He was advised to go to Bath to drink the waters, which appeared for some

time

time to have ſo good an effect upon him, that even he himſelf began to entertain, what he was not apt to do, a better opinion of his own health. His ſymptoms, however, ſoon returned with their uſual violence, and from that moment he gave up all thoughts of recovery, but ſubmitted with the utmoſt cheerfulneſs, and the moſt perfect complacency and reſignation. Upon his return to Edinburgh, though he found himſelf much weaker, yet his cheerfulneſs never abated, and he continued to divert himſelf, as uſual, with correcting his own works for a new edition, with reading books of amuſement, with the converſation of his friends; and ſometimes in the evening with a party at his favourite game of whiſt. His cheerfulneſs was ſo great, and his converſation and amuſements run ſo much in their uſual ſtrain, that, notwithſtanding all bad ſymptoms, many people could not believe he was dying. "I ſhall tell your friend, Colo-"nel Edmonſtone," ſaid Doctor Dundas to him one day, "that I left you much better, and in a fair way of "recovery."—"Doctor," ſaid he, "as I believe you "would not chuſe to tell any thing but the truth, you "had better tell him, that I am dying as faſt as my "enemies, if I have any, could wiſh, and as eaſily and "cheerfully as my beſt friends could deſire." Colonel Edmonſtone ſoon afterwards came to ſee him, and take leave of him; and on his way home he could not forbear writing him a letter, bidding him once more an eternal adieu, and applying to him, as to a dying man, the beautiful French verſes in which the Abbé Chaulieu, in expectation of his own death, laments his approaching ſeparation from his friend the Marquis de la Fare. Mr. Hume's magnanimity and firmneſs were ſuch, that his moſt affectionate friends knew that they hazarded nothing in talking or writing to him as to a dying man; and that, ſo far from being hurt by this frankneſs, he was rather pleaſed and flattered by it. I happened to come into his room while he was reading this letter, which he had juſt received, and which he immediately ſhowed me. I told him, that though I was ſenſible how very much he was weakened, and that ap-

pearances were in many reſpects very bad, yet his cheerfulneſs was ſtill ſo great, the ſpirit of life ſeemed ſtill to be ſo very ſtrong in him, that I could not help entertaining ſome faint hopes. He anſwered, "Your hopes "are groundleſs. An habitual diarrhœa of more than "a year's ſtanding would be a very bad diſeaſe at any "age: At my age it is a mortal one. When I lie down "in the evening I feel myſelf weaker than when I roſe "in the morning; and when I riſe in the morning, "weaker than when I lay down in the evening. I am "ſenſible, beſides, that ſome of my vital parts are af-"fected, ſo that I muſt ſoon die."—"Well," ſaid I, "if it muſt be ſo, you have at leaſt the ſatisfaction of "leaving all your friends, your brother's family in "particular, in great proſperity." He ſaid, that he felt that ſatisfaction ſo ſenſibly, that when he was reading, a few days before, Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, among all the excuſes which are alleged to Charon for not entering readily into his boat, he could not find one that fitted him; he had no houſe to finiſh, he had no daughter to provide for, he had no enemies upon whom he wiſhed to revenge himſelf. "I could not well ima-"gine," ſaid he, "what excuſe I could make to Cha-"ron in order to obtain a little delay. I have done "every thing of conſequence which I ever meant to do, "and I could at no time expect to leave my relations "and friends in a better ſituation than that in which I "am now likely to leave them: I therefore have all "reaſon to die contented." He then diverted himſelf with inventing ſeveral jocular excuſes which he ſuppoſed he might make to Charon, and with imagining the very ſurly anſwers which it might ſuit the character of Charon to return to them. "Upon further conſideration," ſaid he, "I thought I might ſay to him, 'Good Charon, "I have been correcting my works for a new edition. "Allow me a little time, that I may ſee how the Pub-"lic receives the alterations.' But Charon would "anſwer, 'When you have ſeen the effect of theſe, you "will be for making other alterations: There will be "no end of ſuch excuſes; ſo, honeſt friend, pleaſe ſtep

"into

" into the boat.' But I might ſtill urge, ' Have a " little patience, good Charon; I have been endeavour- " ing to open the eyes of the Public. If I live a few " years longer, I may have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing the " downfall of ſome of the prevailing ſyſtems of ſuper- " ſtition.' But Charon would then loſe all temper " and decency. ' You loitering rogue, that will not " happen theſe many hundred years. Do you fancy I " will grant you a leaſe for ſo long a term? Get into " the boat this inſtant, you lazy loitering rogue."

But though Mr. Hume always talked of his approaching diſſolution with great cheerfulneſs, he never affected to make any parade of his magnanimity. He never mentioned the ſubject but when the converſation naturally led to it, and never dwelt longer upon it than the courſe of the converſation happened to require: It was a ſubject, indeed, which occurred pretty frequently, in conſequence of the inquiries which his friends, who came to ſee him, naturally made concerning the ſtate of his health. The converſation which I mentioned above, and which paſſed on Thurſday the 8th of Auguſt, was the laſt, except one, that I ever had with him. He had now become ſo very weak, that the company of his moſt intimate friends fatigued him; for his cheerfulneſs was ſtill ſo great, his complaiſance and ſocial diſpoſition were ſtill ſo entire, that when any friend was with him, he could not help talking more, and with greater exertion, than ſuited the weakneſs of his body. At his own deſire, therefore, I agreed to leave Edinburgh, where I was ſtaying partly upon his account, and returned to my mother's houſe here, at Kirkaldy, upon condition that he would ſend for me whenever he wiſhed to ſee me; the phyſician who ſaw him moſt frequently, Doctor Black, undertaking, in the mean time, to write me occaſionally an account of the ſtate of his health.

On the 22d of Auguſt, the Doctor wrote me the following letter:

" Since my laſt Mr. Hume has paſſed his time pretty eaſily, but is much weaker. He ſits up, goes down ſtairs once a day, and amuſes himſelf with reading, but

ſeldom ſees any body. He finds that even the converſation of his moſt intimate friends fatigues and oppreſſes him; and it is happy that he does not need it, for he is quite free from anxiety, impatience, or low ſpirits, and paſſes his time very well with the aſſiſtance of amuſing books."

I received the day after a letter from Mr. Hume himſelf, of which the following is an extract:

"My deareſt Friend, Edinburgh, Aug. 23, 1776.

"I am obliged to make uſe of my nephew's hand in writing to you, as I do not riſe to-day. * *

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"I go very faſt to decline, and laſt night had a ſmall fever, which I hoped might put a quicker period to this tedious illneſs; but unluckily it has in a great meaſure gone off. I cannot ſubmit to your coming over here on my account, as it is poſſible for me to ſee you ſo ſmall a part of the day; but Doctor Black can better inform you concerning the degree of ſtrength which may from time to time remain with me. Adieu, &c."

Three days after, I received the following letter from Doctor Black:

"Dear Sir, Edinburgh, Monday, Aug. 26, 1776.

"Yeſterday, about four o'clock afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thurſday and Friday, when his diſeaſe became exceſſive, and ſoon weakened him ſo much, that he could no longer riſe out of his bed. He continued to the laſt perfectly ſenſible, and free from much pain or feelings of diſtreſs. He never dropped the ſmalleſt expreſſion of impatience; but when he had occaſion to ſpeak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderneſs. I thought it improper to write to bring you over, eſpecially as I heard that he had dictated a letter to you, deſiring you not to come. When he became very weak, it coſt him an effort to ſpeak, and he died in ſuch a happy compoſure of mind that nothing could exceed it."

Thus

Thus died our moſt excellent and never-to-be-forgotten friend; concerning whoſe philoſophical opinions men will no doubt judge variouſly, every one approving or condemning them, according as they happen to coincide or diſagree with his own; but concerning whoſe character and conduct there can ſcarce be a difference of opinion. His temper, indeed, ſeemed to be more happily balanced, if I may be allowed ſuch an expreſſion, than that perhaps of any other man I have ever known. Even in the loweſt ſtate of his fortune, his great and neceſſary frugality never hindered him from exerciſing, upon proper occaſions, acts both of charity and generoſity. It was a frugality founded not upon avarice, but upon the love of independency. The extreme gentleneſs of his nature never weakened either the firmneſs of his mind, or the ſteadineſs of his reſolutions. His conſtant pleaſantry was the genuine effuſion of good-nature and good-humour, tempered with delicacy and modeſty, and without even the ſlighteſt tincture of malignity, ſo frequently the diſagreeable ſource of what is called wit in other men. It never was the meaning of his raillery to mortify; and therefore, far from offending, it ſeldom failed to pleaſe and delight even thoſe who were the objects of it. To his friends, who were frequently the objects of it, there was not, perhaps, any one of all his great and amiable qualities which contributed more to endear his converſation. And that gaiety of temper, ſo agreeable in ſociety, but which is ſo often accompanied with frivolous and ſuperficial qualities, was in him certainly attended with the moſt ſevere application, the moſt extenſive learning, the greateſt depth of thought, and a capacity in every reſpect the moſt comprehenſive. Upon the whole, I have always conſidered him, both in his life-time and ſince his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wiſe and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.

I ever am, dear Sir,
Moſt affectionately your's,
ADAM SMITH.

THE

Hiſtory of England.

CHAP. I.

The Britons—Romans—Saxons—The Heptarchy—The Kingdom of Kent—of Northumberland—of Eaſt-Anglia—of Mercia—of Eſſex—of Suſſex—of Weſſex.

THE BRITONS.

THE curioſity, entertained by all civilized nations, of inquiring into the exploits and adventures of their anceſtors, commonly excites a regret that the hiſtory of remote ages ſhould always be ſo much involved in obſcurity, uncertainty, and contradiction. Ingenious men, poſſeſſed of leiſure, are apt to puſh their reſearches beyond the period in which literary monuments are framed or preſerved; without reflecting, that the hiſtory of paſt events is immediately loſt or disfigured when entruſted to memory and oral tradition, and that the adventures of barbarous nations, even if they were recorded, could afford little or no entertainment to men born in a more cultivated age. The convulſions of a civilized ſtate uſually compoſe the moſt inſtructive and moſt intereſting part of its hiſtory; but the ſudden, violent, and unprepared revolutions incident to barbarians, are ſo much guided by caprice, and terminate ſo often in cruelty, that they diſguſt us by the uniformity of their appearance; and it is rather fortunate for letters that they are buried in ſilence and oblivion. The only certain means by which nations can indulge their curioſity in reſearches concerning their remote origin, is to conſider the language, manners, and cuſtoms of their anceſtors, and

and to compare them with thoſe of the neighbouring nations. The fables, which are commonly employed to ſupply the place of true hiſtory, ought entirely to be diſregarded; or if any exception be admitted to this general rule, it can only be in favour of the ancient Grecian fictions, which are ſo celebrated and ſo agreeable, that they will ever be the objects of the attention of mankind. Neglecting, therefore, all traditions, or rather tales, concerning the more early hiſtory of Britain, we ſhall only conſider the ſtate of the inhabitants as it appeared to the Romans on their invaſion of this country: We ſhall briefly run over the events which attended the conqueſt made by that empire, as belonging more to Roman than Britiſh ſtory: We ſhall haſten through the obſcure and unintereſting period of Saxon annals; and ſhall reſerve a more full narration for thoſe times when the truth is both ſo well aſcertained, and ſo complete, as to promiſe entertainment and inſtruction to the reader.

All ancient writers agree in repreſenting the firſt inhabitants of Britain as a tribe of the Gauls or Celtæ, who peopled that iſland from the neighbouring continent. Their language was the ſame, their manners, their government, their ſuperſtition; varied only by thoſe ſmall differences, which time, or a communication with the bordering nations, muſt neceſſarily introduce. The inhabitants of Gaul, eſpecially in thoſe parts which lie contiguous to Italy, had acquired, from a commerce with their ſouthern neighbours, ſome refinement in the arts, which gradually diffuſed themſelves northwards, and ſpread but a very faint light over this iſland. The Greek and Roman navigators or merchants (for there were ſcarcely any other travellers in thoſe ages) brought back the moſt ſhocking accounts of the ferocity of the people, which they magnified, as uſual, in order to excite the admiration of their countrymen. The ſouth-eaſt parts, however, of Britain, had already, before the age of Cæſar, made the firſt and moſt requiſite ſtep towards a civil ſettlement; and the Britons, by tillage and agriculture, had there increaſed to a great multitude. The other inhabitants of the iſland ſtill main-

maintained themſelves by paſture: They were clothed with ſkins of beaſts: They dwelt in huts, which they reared in the foreſts and marſhes, with which the country was covered: They ſhifted eaſily their habitation, when actuated either by the hopes of plunder, or the fear of an enemy: The convenience of feeding their cattle was even a ſufficient motive for removing their ſeats; and as they were ignorant of all the refinements of life, their wants and their poſſeſſions were equally ſcanty and limited.

The Britons were divided into many ſmall nations or tribes; and being a military people, whoſe ſole property was their arms and their cattle, it was impoſſible, after they had acquired a reliſh of liberty, for their princes or chieftains to eſtabliſh any deſpotic authority over them. Their governments, though monarchical, were free, as well as thoſe of all the Celtic nations; and the common people ſeem even to have enjoyed more liberty among them than among the nations of Gaul, from whom they were deſcended. Each ſtate was divided into factions within itſelf: It was agitated with jealouſy or animoſity againſt the neighbouring ſtates; and while the arts of peace were yet unknown, wars were the chief occupation, and formed the chief object of ambition, among the people.

The religion of the Britons was one of the moſt conſiderable parts of their government; and the Druids, who were their prieſts, poſſeſſed great authority among them. Beſides miniſtering at the altar, and directing all religious duties, they preſided over the education of youth; they enjoyed an immunity from wars and taxes; they poſſeſſed both the civil and criminal juriſdiction; they decided all controverſies among ſtates as well as among private perſons, and whoever refuſed to ſubmit to their decree was expoſed to the moſt ſevere penalties. The ſentence of excommunication was pronounced againſt him; he was forbidden acceſs to the ſacrifices or public worſhip; he was debarred all intercourſe with his fellow-citizens, even in the common affairs of life; his company was univerſally ſhunned, as profane and dangerous; he

was

was refuſed the protection of law; and death itſelf became an acceptable relief from the miſery and infamy to which he was expoſed. Thus the bands of government, which were naturally looſe among that rude and turbulent people, were happily corroborated by the terrors of their ſuperſtition.

No ſpecies of ſuperſtition was ever more terrible than that of the Druids. Beſides the ſevere penalties which it was in the power of the eccleſiaſtics to inflict in this world, they inculcated the eternal tranſmigration of ſouls, and thereby extended their authority as far as the fears of their timorous votaries. They practiſed their rites in dark groves, or other ſecret receſſes; and in order to throw a greater myſtery over their religion, they communicated their doctrines only to the initiated, and ſtrictly forbad the committing of them to writing, leſt they ſhould at any time be expoſed to the examination of the profane vulgar. Human ſacrifices were practiſed among them: The ſpoils of war were often devoted to their divinities, and they puniſhed with the ſevereſt tortures whoever dared to ſecrete any part of the conſecrated offering: Theſe treaſures they kept in woods and foreſts, ſecured by no other guard than the terrors of their religion; and this ſteady conqueſt over human avidity may be regarded as more ſignal than their prompting men to the moſt extraordinary and moſt violent efforts. No idolatrous worſhip ever attained ſuch an aſcendant over mankind as that of the ancient Gauls and Britons; and the Romans, after their conqueſt, finding it impoſſible to reconcile thoſe nations to the laws and inſtitutions of their maſters, while it maintained its authority, were at laſt obliged to aboliſh it by penal ſtatutes; a violence which had never, in any other inſtance, been practiſed by thoſe tolerating conquerors.

THE ROMANS.

THE Britons had long remained in this rude but independent ſtate, when Cæſar, having over-run all Gaul by his victories, firſt caſt his eye on their iſland. He was

was not allured either by its riches or its renown; but being ambitious of carrying the Roman arms into a new world, then moſtly unknown, he took advantage of a ſhort interval in his Gaulic wars, and made an invaſion on Britain. The natives, informed of his intention, were ſenſible of the unequal conteſt, and endeavoured to appeaſe him by ſubmiſſions, which however retarded not the execution of his deſign. After ſome reſiſtance he landed, as is ſuppoſed, at Deal (anno ante C. 55); and having obtained ſeveral advantages over the Britons, and obliged them to promiſe hoſtages for their future obedience, he was conſtrained, by the neceſſity of his affairs, and the approach of winter, to withdraw his forces into Gaul. The Britons, relieved from the terror of his arms, neglected the performance of their ſtipulations; and that haughty conqueror reſolved next ſummer to chaſtiſe them for this breach of treaty. He landed with a greater force, and though he found a more regular reſiſtance from the Britons, who had united under Caſſivelaunus, one of their petty princes, he diſcomfited them in every action. He advanced into the country; paſſed the Thames in the face of the enemy; took and burned the capital of Caſſivelaunus; eſtabliſhed his ally Mandubratius in the ſovereignty of the Trinobantes; and having obliged the inhabitants to make him new ſubmiſſions, he again returned with his army into Gaul, and left the authority of the Romans more nominal than real in this iſland.

The civil wars which enſued, and which prepared the way for the eſtabliſhment of monarchy in Rome, ſaved the Britons from that yoke which was ready to be impoſed upon them. Auguſtus, the ſucceſſor of Cæſar, content with the victory obtained over the liberties of his own country, was little ambitious of acquiring fame by foreign wars, and being apprehenſive leſt the ſame unlimited extent of dominion, which had ſubverted the republic, might alſo overwhelm the empire, he recommended it to his ſucceſſors never to enlarge the territories of the Romans. Tiberius, jealous of the fame which might be acquired by his generals, made this advice of Auguſtus a pretence for his inactivity. The mad ſallies

of Caligula, in which he menaced Britain with an invaſion, ſerved only to expoſe himſelf and the empire to ridicule; and the Britons had now, during almoſt a century, enjoyed their liberty unmoleſted; when the Romans, in the reign of Claudius, began to think ſeriouſly of reducing them under their dominion. Without ſeeking any more juſtifiable reaſons of hoſtility than were employed by the late Europeans in ſubjecting the Africans and Americans, they ſent over an army (A. D. 43) under the command of Plautius, an able general, who gained ſome victories, and made a conſiderable progreſs in ſubduing the inhabitants. Claudius himſelf, finding matters ſufficiently prepared for his reception, made a journey into Britain, and received the ſubmiſſion of ſeveral Britiſh ſtates, the Canti, Atrebates, Regni, and Trinobantes, who inhabited the ſouth-eaſt parts of the iſland, and whom their poſſeſſions, and more cultivated manner of life, rendered willing to purchaſe peace at the expence of their liberty. The other Britons, under the command of Caractacus, ſtill maintained an obſtinate reſiſtance, and the Romans made little progreſs againſt them, till Oſtorius Scapula was ſent over to command their armies. (A. D. 50.) This general advanced the Roman conqueſts over the Britons; pierced into the country of the Silures, a warlike nation who inhabited the banks of the Severne; defeated Caractacus in a great battle, took him priſoner, and ſent him to Rome, where his magnanimous behaviour procured him better treatment than thoſe conquerors uſually beſtowed on captive princes.

Notwithſtanding theſe misfortunes, the Britons were not ſubdued; and this iſland was regarded by the ambitious Romans as a field in which military honour might ſtill be acquired. Under the reign of Nero (A. D. 59), Suetonius Paulinus was inveſted with the command, and prepared to ſignalize his name by victories over thoſe barbarians. Finding that the iſland of Mona, now Angleſey, was the chief ſeat of the Druids, he reſolved to attack it, and to ſubject a place which was the centre of their ſuperſtition, and which afforded protection to all their

their baffled forces. The Britons endeavoured to obſtruct his landing on this ſacred iſland, both by the force of their arms and the terrors of their religion. The women and prieſts were intermingled with the ſoldiers upon the ſhore; and running about with flaming torches in their hands, and toſſing their diſhevelled hair, they ſtruck greater terror into the aſtoniſhed Romans by their howlings, cries, and execrations, than the real danger from the armed forces was able to inſpire. But Suetonius, exhorting his troops to deſpiſe the menaces of a ſuperſtition which they deſpiſed, impelled them to the attack, drove the Britons off the field, burned the Druids in the ſame fires which thoſe prieſts had prepared for their captive enemies, deſtroyed all the conſecrated groves and altars, and having thus triumphed over the religion of the Britons, he thought his future progreſs would be eaſy, in reducing the people to ſubjection. But he was diſappointed in his expectations. The Britons, taking advantage of his abſence, were all in arms, and headed by Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, who had been treated in the moſt ignominious manner by the Roman tribunes, had already attacked with ſucceſs ſeveral ſettlements of their inſulting conquerors. Suetonius haſtened to the protection of London, which was already a flouriſhing Roman colony; but he found on his arrival that it would be requiſite, for the general ſafety, to abandon that place to the mercileſs fury of the enemy. London was reduced to aſhes; ſuch of the inhabitants as remained in it were cruelly maſſacred; the Romans, and all ſtrangers to the number of 70,000, were every-where put to the ſword without diſtinction; and the Britons, by rendering the war thus bloody, ſeemed determined to cut off all hopes of peace or compoſition with the enemy. But this cruelty was revenged by Suetonius in a great and deciſive battle, where 80,000 of the Britons are ſaid to have periſhed, and Boadicea herſelf, rather than fall into the hands of the enraged victor, put an end to her own life by poiſon. Nero ſoon after recalled Suetonius from a government where, by ſuffering and inflicting ſo many ſeverities, he was judged improper for compoſing the angry and

alarmed minds of the inhabitants. After ſome interval, Cerealis received the command from Veſpaſian, and by his bravery propagated the terror of the Roman arms. Julius Frontinus ſucceeded Cerealis both in authority and in reputation: But the general who finally eſtabliſhed the dominion of the Romans in this iſland, was Julius Agricola, who governed it in the reigns of Veſpaſian, Titus, and Domitian, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf in that ſcene of action.

This great commander formed a regular plan for ſubduing Britain, and rendering the acquiſition uſeful to the conquerors. He carried his victorious arms northwards, defeated the Britons in every encounter, pierced into the inacceſſible foreſts and mountains of Caledonia, reduced every ſtate to ſubjection in the ſouthern parts of the iſland, and chaſed before him all the men of fiercer and more intractable ſpirits, who deemed war, and death itſelf, leſs intolerable than ſervitude under the victors. He even defeated them in a deciſive action, which they fought under Galgacus, their leader; and having fixed a chain of garriſons between the friths of Clyde and Forth, he thereby cut off the ruder and more barren parts of the iſland, and ſecured the Roman province from the incurſions of the barbarous inhabitants.

During theſe military enterpriſes he neglected not the arts of peace. He introduced laws and civility among the Britons, taught them to deſire and raiſe all the conveniences of life, reconciled them to the Roman language and manners, inſtructed them in letters and ſcience, and employed every expedient to render thoſe chains which he had forged both eaſy and agreeable to them. The inhabitants, having experienced how unequal their own force was to reſiſt that of the Romans, acquieſced in the dominion of their maſters, and were gradually incorporated as a part of that mighty empire.

This was the laſt durable conqueſt made by the Romans; and Britain, once ſubdued, gave no farther inquietude to the victor. Caledonia alone, defended by its barren mountains, and by the contempt which the Romans entertained for it, ſometimes infeſted the more cul-

cultivated parts of the iſland by the incurſions of its inhabitants. The better to ſecure the frontiers of the empire, Adrian, who viſited this iſland, built a rampart between the river Tyne and the frith of Solway: Lollius Urbicus, under Antoninus Pius, erected one in the place where Agricola had formerly eſtabliſhed his garriſons: Severus, who made an expedition into Britain, and carried his arms to the moſt northern extremity of it, added new fortifications to the wall of Adrian; and during the reigns of all the Roman emperors, ſuch a profound tranquillity prevailed in Britain, that little mention is made of the affairs of that iſland by any hiſtorian. The only incidents which occur, are ſome ſeditions or rebellions of the Roman legions quartered there, and ſome uſurpations of the imperial dignity by the Roman governors. The natives, diſarmed, diſpirited, and ſubmiſſive, had loſt all deſire, and even idea, of their former liberty and independence.

But the period was now come, when that enormous fabric of the Roman empire, which had diffuſed ſlavery and oppreſſion, together with peace and civility, over ſo conſiderable a part of the globe, was approaching towards its final diſſolution. Italy, and the centre of the empire, removed, during ſo many ages, from all concern in the wars, had entirely loſt the military ſpirit, and were peopled by an enervated race, equally diſpoſed to ſubmit to a foreign yoke, or to the tyranny of their own rulers. The emperors found themſelves obliged to recruit their legions from the frontier provinces, where the genius of war, though languiſhing, was not totally extinct; and theſe mercenary forces, careleſs of laws and civil inſtitutions, eſtabliſhed a military government, no leſs dangerous to the ſovereign than to the people. The farther progreſs of the ſame diſorders introduced the bordering Barbarians into the ſervice of the Romans; and thoſe fierce nations, having now added diſcipline to their native bravery, could no longer be reſtrained by the impotent policy of the emperors, who were accuſtomed to employ one in the deſtruction of the others. Senſible of their own force, and allured

by the proſpect of ſo rich a prize, the northern barbarians, in the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, aſſailed at once all the frontiers of the Roman empire; and having firſt ſatiated their avidity by plunder, began to think of fixing a ſettlement in the waſted provinces. The more diſtant barbarians, who occupied the deſerted habitations of the former, advanced in their acquiſitions, and preſſed with their incumbent weight the Roman ſtate, already unequal to the load which it ſuſtained. Inſtead of arming the people in their own defence, the emperors recalled all the diſtant legions, in whom alone they could repoſe confidence; and collected the whole military force for the defence of the capital and centre of the empire. The neceſſity of ſelf-preſervation had ſuperſeded the ambition of power; and the ancient point of honour, never to contract the limits of the empire, could no longer be attended to in this deſperate extremity.

Britain by its ſituation was removed from the fury of theſe barbarous incurſions; and being alſo a remote province, not much valued by the Romans, the legions which defended it were carried over to the protection of Italy and Gaul. But that province, though ſecured by the ſea againſt the inroads of the greater tribes of barbarians, found enemies on its frontiers, who took advantage of its preſent defenceleſs ſituation. The Picts and Scots, who dwelt in the northern parts, beyond the wall of Antoninus, made incurſions upon their peaceable and effeminate neighbours; and beſides the temporary depredations which they committed, theſe combined nations threatened the whole province with ſubjection, or, what the inhabitants more dreaded, with plunder and devaſtation. The Picts ſeem to have been a tribe of the native Britiſh race, who, having been chaſed into the northern parts by the conqueſts of Agricola, had there intermingled with the ancient inhabitants: The Scots were derived from the ſame Celtic origin, had firſt been eſtabliſhed in Ireland, had migrated to the north-weſt coaſts of this iſland, and had long been accuſtomed, as well from their old as their new ſeats, to infeſt the Roman

Roman province by piracy and rapine *. Theſe tribes, finding their more opulent neighbours expoſed to invaſion, ſoon broke over the Roman wall, no longer defended by the Roman arms; and though a contemptible enemy in themſelves, met with no reſiſtance from the unwarlike inhabitants. The Britons, accuſtomed to have recourſe to the emperors for defence as well as government, made ſupplications to Rome; and one legion was ſent over for their protection. This force was an over-match for the barbarians, repelled their invaſion, routed them in every engagement, and having chaſed them into their ancient limits, returned in triumph to the defence of the ſouthern provinces of the empire. Their retreat brought on a new invaſion of the enemy. The Britons made again an application to Rome, and again obtained the aſſiſtance of a legion, which proved effectual for their relief: But the Romans, reduced to extremities at home, and fatigued with thoſe diſtant expeditions, informed the Britons that they muſt no longer look to them for ſuccour, exhorted them to arm in their own defence, and urged that, as they were now their own maſters, it became them to protect by their valour that independence which their ancient lords had conferred upon them. That they might leave the iſland with the better grace, the Romans aſſiſted them in erecting anew the wall of Severus, which was built entirely of ſtone, and which the Britons had not at that time artificers ſkilful enough to repair. And having done this laſt good office to the inhabitants, they bid a final adieu to Britain, about the year 448; after being maſters of the more conſiderable part of it during the courſe of near four centuries.

THE BRITONS.

THE abject Britons regarded this preſent of liberty as fatal to them; and were in no condition to put in practice the prudent counſel given them by the Romans,

* See note [A] at the end of the volume.

to

to arm in their own defence. Unaccuſtomed both to the perils of war and to the cares of civil government, they found themſelves incapable of forming or executing any meaſures for reſiſting the incurſions of the barbarians. Gratian alſo and Conſtantine, two Romans, who had a little before aſſumed the purple in Britain, had carried over to the continent the flower of the Britiſh youth; and having periſhed in their unſucceſsful attempts on the imperial throne, had deſpoiled the iſland of thoſe who, in this deſperate extremity, were beſt able to defend it. The Picts and Scots, finding that the Romans had finally relinquiſhed Britain, now regarded the whole as their prey, and attacked the northern wall with redoubled forces. The Britons, already ſubdued by their own fears, found the ramparts but a weak defence for them; and deſerting their ſtation, left the country entirely open to the inroads of the barbarous enemy. The invaders carried devaſtation and ruin along with them; and exerted to the utmoſt their native ferocity, which was not mitigated by the helpleſs condition and ſubmiſſive behaviour of the inhabitants. The unhappy Britons had a third time recourſe to Rome, which had declared its reſolution for ever to abandon them. Ætius, the patrician, ſuſtained, at that time, by his valour and magnanimity, the tottering ruins of the empire, and revived for a moment, among the degenerate Romans, the ſpirit, as well as diſcipline, of their anceſtors. The Britiſh ambaſſadors carried to him the letter of their countrymen, which was inſcribed, *The Groans of the Britons*. The tenor of the epiſtle was ſuitable to its ſuperſcription. *The barbarians*, ſay they, *on the one hand, chaſe us into the ſea; the ſea, on the other, throws us back upon the barbarians; and we have only the hard choice left us, of periſhing by the ſword or by the waves.* But Ætius, preſſed by the arms of Attila, the moſt terrible enemy that ever aſſailed the empire, had no leiſure to attend to the complaints of allies, whom generoſity alone could induce him to aſſiſt. The Britons, thus rejected, were reduced to deſpair, deſerted their habitations, abandoned tillage, and flying for protection to the

the foreſts and mountains, ſuffered equally from hunger and from the enemy. The barbarians themſelves began to feel the preſſures of famine in a country which they had ravaged; and being haraſſed by the diſperſed Britons, who had not dared to reſiſt them in a body, they retreated with their ſpoils into their own country.

The Britons, taking advantage of this interval, returned to their uſual occupations; and the favourable ſeaſons, which ſucceeded, ſeconded their induſtry, made them ſoon forget their paſt miſeries, and reſtored to them great plenty of all the neceſſaries of life. No more can be imagined to have been poſſeſſed by a people ſo rude, who had not, without the aſſiſtance of the Romans, art of maſonry ſufficient to raiſe a ſtone rampart for their own defence: Yet the monkiſh hiſtorians, who treat of thoſe events, complain of the luxury of the Britons during this period, and aſcribe to that vice, not to their cowardice or improvident counſels, all their ſubſequent calamities.

The Britons, entirely occupied in the enjoyment of the preſent interval of peace, made no proviſion for reſiſting the enemy, who, invited by their former timid behaviour, ſoon threatened them with a new invaſion. We are not exactly informed what ſpecies of civil government the Romans on their departure had left among the Britons; but it appears probable that the great men in the different diſtricts aſſumed a kind of regal, though precarious, authority; and lived in a great meaſure independent of each other. To this diſunion of counſels were alſo added the diſputes of theology; and the diſciples of Pelagius, who was himſelf a native of Britain, having increaſed to a great multitude, gave alarm to the clergy, who ſeem to have been more intent on ſuppreſſing them, than on oppoſing the public enemy. Labouring under theſe domeſtic evils, and menaced with a foreign invaſion, the Britons attended only to the ſuggeſtions of their preſent fears; and following the counſels of Vortigern, prince of Dumnonium, who, though ſtained with every vice, poſſeſſed the chief authority among them, they ſent into Germany a deputation

to

to invite over the Saxons for their protection and assistance.

THE SAXONS.

OF all the barbarous nations, known either in ancient or modern times, the Germans seem to have been the most distinguished both by their manners and political institutions, and to have carried to the highest pitch the virtues of valour and love of liberty; the only virtues which can have place among an uncivilized people, where justice and humanity are commonly neglected. Kingly government, even when established among the Germans (for it was not universal), possessed a very limited authority; and though the sovereign was usually chosen from among the royal family, he was directed in every measure by the common consent of the nation over whom he presided. When any important affairs were transacted, all the warriors met in arms; the men of greatest authority employed persuasion to engage their consent; the people expressed their approbation by rattling their armour, or their dissent by murmurs; there was no necessity for a nice scrutiny of votes among a multitude, who were usually carried with a strong current to one side or the other; and the measure, thus suddenly chosen by general agreement, was executed with alacrity, and prosecuted with vigour. Even in war, the princes governed more by example than by authority: But in peace, the civil union was in a great measure dissolved, and the inferior leaders administered justice after an independent manner, each in his particular district. These were elected by the votes of the people in their great councils; and though regard was paid to nobility in the choice, their personal qualities, chiefly their valour, procured them, from the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, that honourable but dangerous distinction. The warriors of each tribe attached themselves to their leader with the most devoted affection and most unshaken constancy. They attended him as his ornament in peace, as his defence in war, as his council in the administration of justice. Their constant emulation in military renown

nown diſſolved not that inviolable friendſhip which they profeſſed to their chieftain and to each other. To die for the honour of their band, was their chief ambition: To ſurvive its diſgrace, or the death of their leader, was infamous. They even carried into the field their women and children, who adopted all the martial ſentiments of the men: And being thus impelled by every human motive, they were invincible; where they were not oppoſed either by the ſimilar manners and inſtitutions of the neighbouring Germans, or by the ſuperior diſcipline, arms, and numbers of the Romans.

The leaders and their military companions were maintained by the labour of their ſlaves, or by that of the weaker and leſs warlike part of the community whom they defended. The contributions which they levied went not beyond a bare ſubſiſtence; and the honours acquired by a ſuperior rank, were the only reward of their ſuperior dangers and fatigues. All the refined arts of life were unknown among the Germans: Tillage itſelf was almoſt wholly neglected: They even ſeem to have been anxious to prevent any improvements of that nature; and the leaders, by annually diſtributing anew all the land among the inhabitants of each village, kept them from attaching themſelves to particular poſſeſſions, or making ſuch progreſs in agriculture as might divert their attention from military expeditions, the chief occupation of the community.

The Saxons had been for ſome time regarded as one of the moſt warlike tribes of this fierce people, and had become the terror of the neighbouring nations. They had diffuſed themſelves from the northern parts of Germany and the Cimbrian Cherſoneſus, and had taken poſſeſſion of all the ſea-coaſt from the mouth of the Rhine to Jutland; whence they had long infeſted by their piracies all the eaſtern and ſouthern parts of Britain, and the northern of Gaul. In order to oppoſe their inroads, the Romans had eſtabliſhed an officer, whom they called *Count of the Saxon Shore*; and as the naval arts can flouriſh among a civilized people alone, they

they ſeem to have been more ſucceſsful in repelling the Saxons, than any of the other barbarians by whom they were invaded. The diſſolution of the Roman power invited them to renew their inroads; and it was an acceptable circumſtance, that the deputies of the Britons appeared among them, and prompted them to undertake an enterpriſe, to which they were of themſelves ſufficiently inclined.

Hengiſt and Horſa, two brothers, poſſeſſed great credit among the Saxons, and were much celebrated both for their valour and nobility. They were reputed, as moſt of the Saxon princes, to be ſprung from Woden, who was worſhipped as a god among thoſe nations, and they are ſaid to be his great-grandſons; a circumſtance which added much to their authority. We ſhall not attempt to trace any higher the origin of thoſe princes and nations. It is evident what fruitleſs labour it muſt be to ſearch, in thoſe barbarous and illiterate ages, for the annals of a people, when their firſt leaders, known in any true hiſtory, were believed by them to be the fourth in deſcent from a fabulous deity, or from a man exalted by ignorance into that character. The dark induſtry of antiquaries, led by imaginary analogies of names, or by uncertain traditions, would in vain attempt to pierce into that deep obſcurity which covers the remote hiſtory of thoſe nations.

Theſe two brothers, obſerving the other provinces of Germany to be occupied by a warlike and neceſſitous people, and the rich provinces of Gaul already conquered or over-run by other German tribes, found it eaſy to perſuade their countrymen to embrace the ſole enterpriſe which promiſed a favourable opportunity of diſplaying their valour and gratifying their avidity. They embarked their troops in three veſſels, and, about the year 449 or 450, carried over 1600 men, who landed in the iſle of Thanet, and immediately marched to the defence of the Britons againſt the northern invaders. The Scots and Picts were unable to reſiſt the valour of theſe auxiliaries; and the Britons, applauding their own wiſdom

in

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Vortigern and Rowena.

Stothard del.

Engraved for J. Parsons, 21, Paternoster Row. Feb.y 1794.

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in calling over the Saxons, hoped thenceforth to enjoy peace and ſecurity under the powerful protection of that warlike people.

But Hengiſt and Horſa perceiving, from their eaſy victory over the Scots and Picts, with what facility they might ſubdue the Britons themſelves, who had not been able to reſiſt thoſe feeble invaders, were determined to conquer and fight for their own grandeur, not for the defence of their degenerate allies. They ſent intelligence to Saxony of the fertility and riches of Britain; and repreſented as certain the ſubjection of a people ſo long diſuſed to arms, who, being now cut off from the Roman empire, of which they had been a province during ſo many ages, had not yet acquired any union among themſelves, and were deſtitute of all affection to their new liberties, and of all national attachments and regards. The vices and puſillanimity of Vortigern, the Britiſh leader, were a new ground of hope; and the Saxons in Germany, following ſuch agreeable proſpects, ſoon reinforced Hengiſt and Horſa with 5000 men, who came over in ſeventeen veſſels. The Britons now began to entertain apprehenſions of their allies, whoſe numbers they found continually augmenting; but thought of no remedy, except a paſſive ſubmiſſion and connivance. This weak expedient ſoon failed them. The Saxons ſought a quarrel, by complaining that their ſubſidies were ill paid, and their proviſions withdrawn: And immediately taking off the maſk, they formed an alliance with the Picts and Scots, and proceeded to open hoſtility againſt the Britons.

The Britons, impelled by theſe violent extremities, and rouſed to indignation againſt their treacherous auxiliaries, were neceſſitated to take arms; and having depoſed Vortigern, who had become odious from his vices, and from the bad event of his raſh counſels, they put themſelves under the command of his ſon Vortimer. They fought many battles with their enemies; and though the victories in theſe actions be diſputed between the Britiſh and Saxon annaliſts, the progreſs ſtill made by the Saxons proves that the advantage was commonly

on their ſide. In one battle however, fought at Egleſford, now Ailsford, Horſa, the Saxon general, was ſlain, and left the ſole command over his countrymen in the hands of Hengiſt. This active general, continually reinforced by freſh numbers from Germany, carried devaſtation into the moſt remote corners of Britain; and being chiefly anxious to ſpread the terror of his arms, he ſpared neither age, nor ſex, nor condition, wherever he marched with his victorious forces. The private and public edifices of the Britons were reduced to aſhes: The prieſts were ſlaughtered on the altars by thoſe idolatrous ravagers: The biſhops and nobility ſhared the fate of the vulgar: The people, flying to the mountains and deſerts, were intercepted and butchered in heaps: Some were glad to accept of life and ſervitude under their victors: Others, deſerting their native country, took ſhelter in the province of Armorica; where, being charitably received by a people of the ſame language and manners, they ſettled in great numbers, and gave the country the name of Britany.

The Britiſh writers aſſign one cauſe which facilitated the entrance of the Saxons into this iſland; the love with which Vortigern was at firſt ſeized for Rovena, the daughter of Hengiſt, and which that artful warrior made uſe of to blind the eyes of the imprudent monarch. The ſame hiſtorians add, that Vortimer died; and that Vortigern, being reſtored to the throne, accepted of a banquet from Hengiſt at Stonehenge, where 300 of his nobility were treacherouſly ſlaughtered, and himſelf detained captive. But theſe ſtories ſeem to have been invented by the Welſh authors, in order to palliate the weak reſiſtance made at firſt by their countrymen, and to account for the rapid progreſs and licentious devaſtations of the Saxons.

After the death of Vortimer, Ambroſius, a Briton, though of Roman deſcent, was inveſted with the command over his countrymen, and endeavoured, not without ſucceſs, to unite them in their reſiſtance againſt the Saxons. Thoſe conteſts increaſed the animoſity between the two nations, and rouſed the military ſpirit of the an-

cient inhabitants, which had before been ſunk into a fatal lethargy. Hengiſt, however, notwithſtanding their oppoſition, ſtill maintained his ground in Britain; and in order to divide the forces and attention of the natives, he called over a new tribe of Saxons, under the command of his brother Octa, and of Ebiſſa, the ſon of Octa; and he ſettled them in Northumberland. He himſelf remained in the ſouthern parts of the iſland, and laid the foundation of the kingdom of Kent, comprehending the county of that name, Middleſex, Eſſex, and part of Surry. He fixed his royal ſeat at Canterbury; where he governed about forty years, and he died in or near the year 488; leaving his new-acquired dominions to his poſterity.

The ſucceſs of Hengiſt excited the avidity of the other northern Germans; and at different times, and under different leaders, they flocked over in multitudes to the invaſion of this iſland. Theſe conquerors were chiefly compoſed of three tribes, the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes *, who all paſſed under the common appellation, ſometimes of Saxons, ſometimes of Angles; and ſpeaking the ſame language, and being governed by the ſame inſtitutions, they were naturally led, from theſe cauſes as well as from their common intereſt, to unite themſelves againſt the ancient inhabitants. The reſiſtance however, though unequal, was ſtill maintained by the Britons; but became every day more feeble: And their calamities admitted of few intervals, till they were driven into Cornwal and Wales, and received protection from the remote ſituation or inacceſſible mountains of thoſe countries.

The firſt Saxon ſtate, after that of Kent, which was eſtabliſhed in Britain, was the kingdom of South-Saxony. In the year 477, Ælla, a Saxon chief, brought over an army from Germany; and landing on the ſouthern coaſt, proceeded to take poſſeſſion of the neighbouring territory. The Britons, now armed, did not tamely abandon their poſſeſſions; nor were they expelled, till

* The inhabitants of Kent and the Iſle of Wight were Jutes. Eſſex, Middleſex, Surry, Suſſex, and all the ſouthern counties to Cornwal, were peopled by Saxons: Mercia, and other parts of the kingdom, were inhabited by Angles.

defeated in many battles by their warlike invaders. The moſt memorable action, mentioned by hiſtorians, is that of Meacredes-Burn; where, though the Saxons ſeem to have obtained the victory, they ſuffered ſo conſiderable a loſs, as ſomewhat retarded the progreſs of their conqueſts. But Ælla, reinforced by freſh numbers of his countrymen, again took the field againſt the Britons; and laid ſiege to Andred-Ceaſter, which was defended by the garriſon and inhabitants with deſperate valour. The Saxons, enraged by this reſiſtance, and by the fatigues and dangers which they had ſuſtained, redoubled their efforts againſt the place, and, when maſters of it, put all their enemies to the ſword without diſtinction. This deciſive advantage ſecured the conqueſts of Ælla, who aſſumed the name of King, and extended his dominion over Suſſex and a great part of Surry. He was ſtopped in his progreſs to the eaſt by the kingdom of Kent: In that to the weſt by another tribe of Saxons, who had taken poſſeſſion of that territory.

Theſe Saxons, from the ſituation of the country in which they ſettled, were called the Weſt-Saxons, and landed in the year 495, under the command of Cerdic, and of his ſon Kenric. The Britons were, by paſt experience, ſo much on their guard, and ſo well prepared to receive the enemy, that they gave battle to Cerdic the very day of his landing; and though vanquiſhed, ſtill defended, for ſome time, their liberties againſt the invaders. None of the other tribes of Saxons met with ſuch vigorous reſiſtance, or exerted ſuch valour and perſeverance in puſhing their conqueſts. Cerdic was even obliged to call for the aſſiſtance of his countrymen from the kingdoms of Kent and Suſſex, as well as from Germany, and he was thence joined by a freſh army under the command of Porte, and of his ſons Bleda and Megla. Strengthened by theſe ſuccours, he fought, in the year 508, a deſperate battle with the Britons, commanded by Nazan-Leod, who was victorious in the beginning of the action, and routed the wing in which Cerdic himſelf commanded; but Kenric, who had prevailed in the other wing, brought timely aſſiſtance to his father, and reſtored

ſtored the battle, which ended in a complete victory gained by the Saxons. Nazan-Leod periſhed, with 5000 of his army; but left the Britons more weakened than diſcouraged by his death. The war ſtill continued, though the ſucceſs was commonly on the ſide of the Saxons, whoſe ſhort ſwords, and cloſe manner of fighting, gave them great advantage over the miſſile weapons of the Britons. Cerdic was not wanting to his good fortune; and in order to extend his conqueſts, he laid ſiege to Mount Badon or Baneſdowne near Bath, whither the moſt obſtinate of the diſcomfited Britons had retired. The ſouthern Britons, in this extremity, applied for aſſiſtance to Arthur, prince of the Silures, whoſe heroic valour now ſuſtained the declining fate of his country. This is that Arthur ſo much celebrated in the ſongs of Thalieſſin, and the other Britiſh bards, and whoſe military atchievements have been blended with ſo many fables, as even to give occaſion for entertaining a doubt of his real exiſtence. But poets, though they diſfigure the moſt certain hiſtory by their fictions, and uſe ſtrange liberties with truth where they are the ſole hiſtorians, as among the Britons, have commonly ſome foundation for their wildeſt exaggerations. Certain it is, that the ſiege of Badon was raiſed by the Britons in the year 520: And the Saxons were there diſcomfited in a great battle. This misfortune ſtopped the progreſs of Cerdic; but was not ſufficient to wreſt from him the conqueſts which he had already made. He and his ſon Kenric, who ſucceeded him, eſtabliſhed the kingdom of the Weſt-Saxons, or of Weſſex, over the counties of Hants, Dorſet, Wilts, Berks, and the Iſle of Wight, and left their new-acquired dominions to their poſterity. Cerdic died in 534, Kenric in 560.

While the Saxons made this progreſs in the ſouth, their countrymen were not leſs active in other quarters. In the year 527, a great tribe of adventurers, under ſeveral leaders, landed on the eaſt coaſt of Britain; and after fighting many battles, of which hiſtory has preſerved no particular account, they eſtabliſhed three new kingdoms in this iſland. Uffa aſſumed the title of king

of the East-Angles in 575; Crida that of Mercia in 585; and Erkenwin that of East-Saxony or Essex nearly about the same time, but the year is uncertain. This latter kingdom was dismembered from that of Kent, and comprehended Essex, Middlesex, and part of Hertfordshire: That of the East-Angles, the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk: Mercia was extended over all the middle counties, from the banks of the Severn, to the frontiers of these two kingdoms.

The Saxons, soon after the landing of Hengist, had been planted in Northumberland; but, as they met with an obstinate resistance, and made but small progress in subduing the inhabitants, their affairs were in so unsettled a condition, that none of their princes for a long time assumed the appellation of king. At last, in 547, Ida, a Saxon prince of great valour, who claimed a descent, as did all the other princes of that nation, from Woden, brought over a reinforcement from Germany, and enabled the Northumbrians to carry on their conquests over the Britons. He entirely subdued the county now called Northumberland, the bishopric of Durham, as well as some of the south-east counties of Scotland; and he assumed the crown under the title of king of Bernicia. Nearly about the same time, Ælla, another Saxon prince, having conquered Lancashire, and the greater part of Yorkshire, received the appellation of king of Deïri. These two kingdoms were united in the person of Ethilfrid, grandson of Ida, who married Acca, the daughter of Ælla; and expelling her brother Edwin, established one of the most powerful of the Saxon kingdoms by the title of Northumberland. How far his dominions extended into the country now called Scotland, is uncertain; but it cannot be doubted, that all the lowlands, especially the east coast of that country, were peopled in a great measure from Germany; though the expeditions made by the several Saxon adventurers have escaped the records of history. The language spoken in those countries, which is purely Saxon, is a stronger proof of this event, than can be opposed by the imperfect, or rather fabulous annals, which are obtruded on us by the Scottish historians.

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THE HEPTARCHY.

THUS was eſtabliſhed, after a violent conteſt of near a hundred and fifty years, the Heptarchy, or ſeven Saxon kingdoms, in Britain; and the whole ſouthern part of the iſland, except Wales and Cornwal, had totally changed its inhabitants, language, cuſtoms, and political inſtitutions. The Britons, under the Roman dominion, had made ſuch advances towards arts and civil manners, that they had built twenty-eight conſiderable cities within their province, beſides a great number of villages and country-ſeats: But the fierce conquerors by whom they were now ſubdued, threw every thing back into ancient barbarity; and thoſe few natives, who were not either maſſacred or expelled their habitations, were reduced to the moſt abject ſlavery. None of the other northern conquerors, the Franks, Goths, Vandals, or Burgundians, though they over-ran the ſouthern provinces of the empire like a mighty torrent, made ſuch devaſtations in the conquered territories, or were inflamed into ſo violent an animoſity againſt the ancient inhabitants. As the Saxons came over at intervals in ſeparate bodies, the Britons, however at firſt unwarlike, were tempted to make reſiſtance; and hoſtilities being thereby prolonged, proved more deſtructive to both parties, eſpecially to the vanquiſhed. The firſt invaders from Germany, inſtead of excluding other adventurers, who muſt ſhare with them the ſpoils of the ancient inhabitants, were obliged to ſolicit freſh ſupplies from their own country; and a total extermination of the Britons became the ſole expedient for providing a ſettlement and ſubſiſtence to the new planters. Hence there have been found in hiſtory few conqueſts more ruinous than that of the Saxons; and few revolutions more violent than that which they introduced.

So long as the conteſt was maintained with the natives, the ſeveral Saxon princes preſerved a union of counſels and intereſts; but after the Britons were ſhut up in the barren counties of Cornwal and Wales, and gave no farther diſturbance to the conquerors, the band of alliance was in a great meaſure diſſolved among the princes

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of the Heptarchy. Though one prince ſeems ſtill to have been allowed, or to have aſſumed an aſcendant over the whole, his authority, if it ought ever to be deemed regular or legal, was extremely limited; and each ſtate acted as if it had been independent, and wholly ſeparate from the reſt. Wars, therefore, and revolutions and diſſenſions, were unavoidable among a turbulent and military people; and theſe events, however intricate or confuſed, ought now to become the objects of our attention. But, added to the difficulty of carrying on at once the hiſtory of ſeven independent kingdoms, there is great diſcouragement to a writer, ariſing from the uncertainty, at leaſt barrenneſs, of the accounts tranſmitted to us. The monks, who were the only annaliſts during thoſe ages, lived remote from public affairs, conſidered the civil tranſactions as entirely ſubordinate to the eccleſiaſtical, and, beſides partaking of the ignorance and barbarity which were then univerſal, were ſtrongly infected with credulity, with the love of wonder, and with a propenſity to impoſture; vices almoſt inſeparable from their profeſſion and manner of life. The hiſtory of that period abounds in names, but is extremely barren of events; or the events are related ſo much without circumſtances and cauſes, that the moſt profound or moſt eloquent writer muſt deſpair of rendering them either inſtructive or entertaining to the reader. Even the great learning and vigorous imagination of Milton ſunk under the weight; and this author ſcruples not to declare, that the ſkirmiſhes of kites or crows as much merited a particular narrative, as the confuſed tranſactions and battles of the Saxon Heptarchy. In order, however, to connect the events in ſome tolerable meaſure, we ſhall give a ſuccinct account of the ſucceſſions of kings, and of the more remarkable revolutions in each particular kingdom; beginning with that of Kent, which was the firſt eſtabliſhed.

THE KINGDOM OF KENT.

ESCUS ſucceeded his father, Hengiſt, in the kingdom of Kent; but ſeems not to have poſſeſſed the military

tary genius of that conqueror, who firſt made way for the entrance of the Saxon arms into Britain. All the Saxons, who ſought either the fame of valour, or new eſtabliſhments by arms, flocked to the ſtandard of Ælla king of Suſſex, who was carrying on ſucceſsful war againſt the Britons, and laying the foundations of a new kingdom. Eſcus was content to poſſeſs in tranquillity the kingdom of Kent, which he left in 512 to his ſon Octa, in whoſe time the Eaſt-Saxons eſtabliſhed their monarchy, and diſmembered the provinces of Eſſex and Middleſex from that of Kent. His death, after a reign of twenty-two years, made room for his ſon Hermenric in 534, who performed nothing memorable during a reign of thirty-two years, except aſſociating with him his ſon Ethelbert in the government, that he might ſecure the ſucceſſion in his family, and prevent ſuch revolutions as are incident to a turbulent and barbarous monarchy.

Ethelbert revived the reputation of his family, which had languiſhed for ſome generations. The inactivity of his predeceſſors, and the ſituation of his country, ſecured from all hoſtility with the Britons, ſeem to have much enfeebled the warlike genius of the Kentiſh Saxons; and Ethelbert, in his firſt attempt to aggrandize his country, and diſtinguiſh his own name, was unſucceſsful. He was twice diſcomfited in battle by Ceaulin king of Weſſex; and obliged to yield the ſuperiority in the Heptarchy to that ambitious monarch, who preſerved no moderation in his victory, and by reducing the kingdom of Suſſex to ſubjection, excited jealouſy in all the other princes. An aſſociation was formed againſt him; and Ethelbert, intruſted with the command of the allies, gave him battle, and obtained a deciſive victory. Ceaulin died ſoon after; and Ethelbert ſucceeded as well to his aſcendant among the Saxon ſtates, as to his other ambitious projects. He reduced all the princes, except the king of Northumberland, to a ſtrict dependance upon him; and even eſtabliſhed himſelf by force on the throne of Mercia, the moſt extenſive of the Saxon kingdoms. Apprehenſive, however, of a dangerous league againſt him,

him, like that by which he himſelf had been enabled to overthrow Ceaulin, he had the prudence to reſign the kingdom of Mercia to Webba, the rightful heir, the ſon of Crida, who had firſt founded that monarchy. But governed ſtill by ambition more than by juſtice, he gave Webba poſſeſſion of the crown on ſuch conditions, as rendered him little better than a tributary prince under his artful benefactor.

But the moſt memorable event which diſtinguiſhed the reign of this great prince, was the introduction of the Chriſtian religion among the Engliſh Saxons. The ſuperſtition of the Germans, particularly that of the Saxons, was of the groſſeſt and moſt barbarous kind; and being founded on traditional tales received from their anceſtors, not reduced to any ſyſtem, nor ſupported by political inſtitutions like that of the Druids, it ſeems to have made little impreſſion on its votaries, and to have eaſily reſigned its place to the new doctrine promulgated to them. Woden, whom they deemed the anceſtor of all their princes, was regarded as the god of war, and, by a natural conſequence, became their ſupreme deity, and the chief object of their religious worſhip. They believed that, if they obtained the favour of this divinity by their valour (for they made leſs account of the other virtues), they ſhould be admitted after their death into his hall; and repoſing on couches, ſhould ſatiate themſelves with ale from the ſkulls of their enemies whom they had ſlain in battle. Incited by this idea of paradiſe, which gratified at once the paſſion of revenge and that of intemperance, the ruling inclinations of barbarians, they deſpiſed the dangers of war, and increaſed their native ferocity againſt the vanquiſhed by their religious prejudices. We know little of the other theological tenets of the Saxons: We only learn that they were polytheiſts; that they worſhipped the ſun and moon; that they adored the god of thunder, under the name of Thor; that they had images in their temples; that they practiſed ſacrifices; believed firmly in ſpells and inchantments; and admitted in general a ſyſtem of doctrines which they held as ſacred, but which,

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like all other ſuperſtitions, muſt carry the air of the wildeſt extravagance, if propounded to thoſe who are not familiarized to it from their earlieſt infancy.

The conſtant hoſtilities which the Saxons maintained againſt the Britons, would naturally indiſpoſe them for receiving the Chriſtian faith, when preached to them by ſuch inveterate enemies; and perhaps the Britons, as is objected to them by Gildas and Bede, were not over-fond of communicating to their cruel invaders the doctrine of eternal life and ſalvation. But as a civilized people, however ſubdued by arms, ſtill maintain a ſenſible ſuperiority over barbarous and ignorant nations, all the other northern conquerors of Europe had been already induced to embrace the Chriſtian faith, which they found eſtabliſhed in the empire; and it was impoſſible but the Saxons, informed of this event, muſt have regarded with ſome degree of veneration a doctrine, which had acquired the aſcendant over all their brethren. However limited in their views, they could not but have perceived a degree of cultivation in the ſouthern countries beyond what they themſelves poſſeſſed; and it was natural for them to yield to that ſuperior knowledge, as well as zeal, by which the inhabitants of the Chriſtian kingdoms were even at that time diſtinguiſhed.

But theſe cauſes might long have failed of producing any conſiderable effect, had not a favourable incident prepared the means of introducing Chriſtianity into Kent. Ethelbert, in his father's lifetime, had married Bertha, the only daughter of Caribert king of Paris, one of the deſcendants of Clovis, the conqueror of Gaul; but before he was admitted to this alliance, he was obliged to ſtipulate that the princeſs ſhould enjoy the free exerciſe of her religion; a conceſſion not difficult to be obtained from the idolatrous Saxons. Bertha brought over a French biſhop to the court of Canterbury; and being zealous for the propagation of her religion, ſhe had been very aſſiduous in her devotional exerciſes, had ſupported the credit of her faith by an irreproachable conduct, and had employed every art of inſinuation and addreſs to reconcile her huſband to her religious principles. Her popu-

popularity in the court, and her influence over Ethelbert, had ſo well paved the way for the reception of the Chriſtian doctrine, that Gregory, ſirnamed the Great, then Roman pontiff, began to entertain hopes of effecting a project, which he himſelf, before he mounted the papal throne, had once embraced, of converting the Britiſh Saxons.

It happened that this prelate, at that time in a private ſtation, had obſerved in the market-place of Rome ſome Saxon youth expoſed to ſale, whom the Roman merchants, in their trading voyages to Britain, had bought of their mercenary parents. Struck with the beauty of their fair complexions and blooming countenances, Gregory aſked to what country they belonged; and being told they were *Angles*, he replied, that they ought more properly to be denominated *angels:* It were a pity that the Prince of Darkneſs ſhould enjoy ſo fair a prey, and that ſo beautiful a frontiſpiece ſhould cover a mind deſtitute of internal grace and righteouſneſs. Inquiring farther concerning the name of their province, he was informed, that it was Deïri, a diſtrict of Northumberland: *Deïri!* replied he, *that is good! They are called to the mercy of God from his anger*, De ira. *But what is the name of the king of that province?* He was told it was *Ælla* or *Alla: Alleluia*, cried he: *We muſt endeavour that the praiſes of God be ſung in their country.* Moved by theſe alluſions, which appeared to him ſo happy, he determined to undertake, himſelf, a miſſion into Britain; and having obtained the Pope's approbation, he prepared for that perilous journey: But his popularity at home was ſo great, that the Romans, unwilling to expoſe him to ſuch dangers, oppoſed his deſign; and he was obliged, for the preſent, to lay aſide all farther thoughts of executing that pious purpoſe.

The controverſy between the Pagans and the Chriſtians was not entirely cooled in that age; and no pontiff, before Gregory, had ever carried to greater exceſs an intemperate zeal againſt the former religion. He had waged war with all the precious monuments of the ancients, and even with their writings; which, as appears from

from the ſtrain of his own wit, as well as from the ſtyle of his compoſitions, he had not taſte or genius ſufficient to comprehend. Ambitious to diſtinguiſh his pontificate by the converſion of the Britiſh Saxons, he pitched on Auguſtine, a Roman monk, and ſent him with forty aſſociates to preach the goſpel in this iſland. Theſe miſſionaries, terrified with the dangers which might attend their propoſing a new doctrine to ſo fierce a people, of whoſe language they were ignorant, ſtopped ſome time in France, and ſent back Auguſtine to lay the hazards and difficulties before the Pope, and crave his permiſſion to deſiſt from the undertaking. But Gregory exhorted them to perſevere in their purpoſe, adviſed them to chuſe ſome interpreters from among the Franks, who ſtill ſpoke the ſame language with the Saxons, and recommending them to the good offices of queen Brunehaut, who had at this time uſurped the ſovereign power in France. This princeſs, though ſtained with every vice of treachery and cruelty, either poſſeſſed or pretended great zeal for the cauſe; and Gregory acknowledged that to her friendly aſſiſtance was, in a great meaſure, owing the ſucceſs of that undertaking.

Auguſtine, on his arrival in Kent, in the year 597, found the danger much leſs than he had apprehended. Ethelbert, already well-diſpoſed towards the Chriſtian faith, aſſigned him a habitation in the iſle of Thanet; and ſoon after admitted him to a conference. Apprehenſive, however, leſt ſpells or enchantments might be employed againſt him by prieſts, who brought an unknown worſhip from a diſtant country, he had the precaution to receive them in the open air, where he believed the force of their magic would be more eaſily diſſipated. Here Auguſtine, by means of his interpreters, delivered to him the tenets of the Chriſtian faith, and promiſed him eternal joys above, and a kingdom in heaven without end, if he would be perſuaded to receive that ſalutary doctrine. "Your words and promiſes," replied Ethelbert, "are fair; but becauſe they are new "and uncertain, I cannot entirely yield to them, and "relinquiſh the principles which I and my anceſtors

" have ſo long maintained. You are welcome, how-
" ever, to remain here in peace; and as you have un-
" dertaken ſo long a journey, ſolely, as it appears, for
" what you believe to be for our advantage, I will ſup-
" ply you with all neceſſaries, and permit you to deliver
" your doctrine to my ſubjects."

Auguſtine, encouraged by this favourable reception, and ſeeing now a proſpect of ſucceſs, proceeded with redoubled zeal to preach the goſpel to the Kentiſh Saxons. He attracted their attention by the auſterity of his manners, by the ſevere penances to which he ſubjected himſelf, by the abſtinence and ſelf-denial which he practiſed: And having excited their wonder, by a courſe of life which appeared ſo contrary to nature, he procured more eaſily their belief of miracles, which, it was pretended, he wrought for their converſion. Influenced by theſe motives, and by the declared favour of the court, numbers of the Kentiſh men were baptized; and the king himſelf was perſuaded to ſubmit to that rite of Chriſtianity. His example had great influence with his ſubjects; but he employed no force to bring them over to the new doctrine. Auguſtine thought proper, in the commencement of his miſſion, to aſſume the appearance of the greateſt lenity: He told Ethelbert, that the ſervice of Chriſt muſt be entirely voluntary, and that no violence ought ever to be uſed in propagating ſo ſalutary a doctrine.

The intelligence received of theſe ſpiritual conqueſts, afforded great joy to the Romans; who now exulted as much in thoſe peaceful trophies, as their anceſtors had ever done in their moſt ſanguinary triumphs and moſt ſplendid victories. Gregory wrote a letter to Ethelbert, in which, after informing him that the end of the world was approaching, he exhorted him to diſplay his zeal in the converſion of his ſubjects, to exert rigour againſt the worſhip of idols, and to build up the good work of holineſs, by every expedient of exhortation, terror, blandiſhment, or correction: A doctrine more ſuitable to that age, and to the uſual papal maxims, than the tolerating principles which Auguſtine had thought it prudent

dent to inculcate. The pontiff alſo anſwered ſome queſtions, which the miſſionary had put concerning the government of the new church of Kent. Beſides other queries, which it is not material here to relate, Auguſtine aſked, *Whether couſin-germans might be allowed to marry?* Gregory anſwered, that that liberty had indeed been formerly granted by the Roman law; but that experience had ſhewn that no iſſue could ever come from ſuch marriages; and he therefore prohibited them. Auguſtine aſked, *Whether a woman pregnant might be baptized?* Gregory anſwered, that he ſaw no objection. *How ſoon after the birth the child might receive baptiſm?* It was anſwered, Immediately, if neceſſary. *How ſoon a huſband might have commerce with his wife after her delivery?* Not till ſhe had given ſuck to her child; a practice to which Gregory exhorts all women. *How ſoon a man might enter the church, or receive the ſacrament, after having had commerce with his wife?* It was replied, that, unleſs he had approached her without deſire, merely for the ſake of propagating his ſpecies, he was not without ſin: But in all caſes it was requiſite for him, before he entered the church, or communicated, to purge himſelf by prayer and ablution; and he ought not, even after uſing theſe precautions, to participate immediately of the ſacred duties. There are ſome other queſtions and replies ſtill more indecent and more ridiculous*. And, on the whole, it appears that Gregory and his miſſionary, if ſympathy of manners have any influence, were better calculated, than men of more refined underſtandings, for making a progreſs with the ignorant and barbarous Saxons.

* Auguſtine aſks, *Si mulier menſtrua conſuetudine tenetur, an eccleſiam intrare ei licet, aut ſacræ communionis ſacramenta percipere?* Gregory anſwers, *Sanctæ communionis myſterium in eiſdem diebus percipere non debet prohiberi. Si autem ex veneratione magna percipere non præſumitur, laudanda eſt.* Auguſtine aſks, *Si poſt illuſionem, quæ per ſomnum ſolet accidere, vel corpus Domini quilibet accipere valeat; vel, ſi ſacerdos ſit, ſacra myſteria celebrare?* Gregory anſwers this learned queſtion by many learned diſtinctions.

The more to facilitate the reception of Chriſtianity, Gregory enjoined Auguſtine to remove the idols from the heathen altars, but not to deſtroy the altars themſelves; becauſe the people, he ſaid, would be allured to frequent the Chriſtian worſhip, when they found it celebrated in a place which they were accuſtomed to revere. And as the Pagans practiſed ſacrifices, and feaſted with the prieſts on their offerings, he alſo exhorted the miſſionary to perſuade them, on Chriſtian feſtivals, to kill their cattle in the neighbourhood of the church, and to indulge themſelves in thoſe cheerful entertainments to which they had been habituated. Theſe political compliances ſhew that, notwithſtanding his ignorance and prejudices, he was not unacquainted with the arts of governing mankind. Auguſtine was conſecrated archbiſhop of Canterbury, was endowed by Gregory with authority over all the Britiſh churches, and received the pall, a badge of eccleſiaſtical honour, from Rome. Gregory alſo adviſed him not to be too much elated with his gift of working miracles; and as Auguſtine, proud of the ſucceſs of his miſſion, ſeemed to think himſelf entitled to extend his authority over the biſhops of Gaul, the Pope informed him, that they lay entirely without the bounds of his juriſdiction.

The marriage of Ethelbert with Bertha, and much more his embracing Chriſtianity, begat a connexion of his ſubjects with the French, Italians, and other nations on the continent, and tended to reclaim them from that groſs ignorance and barbarity in which all the Saxon tribes had been hitherto involved. Ethelbert alſo enacted, with the conſent of the ſtates of his kingdom, a body of laws, the firſt written laws promulgated by any of the northern conquerors; and his reign was in every reſpect glorious to himſelf, and beneficial to his people. He governed the kingdom of Kent fifty years; and dying in 616, left the ſucceſſion to his ſon, Eadbald. This prince, ſeduced by a paſſion for his mother-in-law, deſerted for ſome time the Chriſtian faith, which permitted not theſe inceſtuous marriages: His whole people immediately returned with him to idolatry. Laurentius,

BRITISH
MUSEUM

PARSONS'S GENUINE EDITION OF HUME'S ENGLAND.

Engleg. del. Engraved for J. Parsons, Paternoster Row. July 1794. Roberts Sculp.

rentius, the ſucceſſor of Auguſtine, found the Chriſtian worſhip wholly abandoned, and was prepared to return to France, in order to eſcape the mortification of preaching the goſpel without fruit to the infidels. Mellitus and Juſtus, who had been conſecrated biſhops of London and Rocheſter, had already departed the kingdom; when Laurentius, before he ſhould entirely abandon his dignity, made one effort to reclaim the king. He appeared before that prince; and throwing off his veſtments, ſhowed his body all torn with bruiſes and ſtripes, which he had received. Eadbald, wondering that any man ſhould have dared to treat in that manner a perſon of his rank, was told by Laurentius, that he had received this chaſtiſement from St. Peter, the prince of the apoſtles, who had appeared to him in a viſion, and ſeverely reproving him for his intention to deſert his charge, had inflicted on him theſe viſible marks of his diſpleaſure. Whether Eadbald was ſtruck with the miracle, or influenced by ſome other motive, he divorced himſelf from his mother-in-law, and returned to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity: His whole people returned with him. Eadbald reached not the fame or authority of his father, and died in 640, after a reign of twenty-five years; leaving two ſons, Erminfrid and Ercombert.

Ercombert, though the younger ſon, by Emma, a French princeſs, found means to mount the throne. He is celebrated by Bede for two expioits, for eſtabliſhing the faſt of Lent in his kingdom, and for utterly extirpating idolatry; which, notwithſtanding the prevalence of Chriſtianity, had hitherto been tolerated by the two preceding monarchs. He reigned twenty-four years; and left the crown to Egbert his ſon, who reigned nine years. This prince is renowned for his encouragement of learning; but infamous for putting to death his two couſin-germans, ſons of Erminfrid, his uncle. The eccleſiaſtical writers praiſe him for his beſtowing on his ſiſter, Domnona, ſome lands in the Iſle of Thanet, where ſhe founded a monaſtery.

The bloody precaution of Egbert could not fix the crown on the head of his ſon Edric. Lothaire, brother

of the deceaſed prince, took poſſeſſion of the kingdom; and, in order to ſecure the power in his family, he aſſociated with him Richard, his ſon, in the adminiſtration of the government. Edric, the diſpoſſeſſed prince, had recourſe to Edilwach, king of Suſſex, for aſſiſtance; and being ſupported by that prince, fought a battle with his uncle, who was defeated and ſlain. Richard fled into Germany, and afterwards died in Lucca, a city of Tuſcany. William of Malmeſbury aſcribes Lothaire's bad fortune to two crimes, his concurrence in the murder of his couſins, and his contempt for reliques.

Lothaire reigned eleven years; Edric his ſucceſſor, only two. Upon the death of the latter, which happened in 686, Widred, his brother, obtained poſſeſſion of the crown. But as the ſucceſſion had been of late ſo much disjointed by revolutions and uſurpations, faction began to prevail among the nobility; which invited Cedwalla king of Weſſex, with his brother Mollo, to attack the kingdom. Theſe invaders committed great devaſtations in Kent; but the death of Mollo, who was ſlain in a ſkirmiſh, gave a ſhort breathing-time to that kingdom. Widred reſtored the affairs of Kent; and, after a reign of thirty-two years, left the crown to his poſterity. Eadbert, Ethelbert, and Alric, his deſcendants, ſucceſſively mounted the throne. After the death of the laſt, which happened in 794, the royal family of Kent was extinguiſhed; and every factious leader who could entertain hopes of aſcending the throne, threw the ſtate into confuſion. Egbert, who firſt ſucceeded, reigned but two years; Cuthred, brother to the king of Mercia, ſix years; Baldred, an illegitimate branch of the royal family, eighteen: And after a troubleſome and precarious reign, he was, in the year 723, expelled by Egbert king of Weſſex, who diſſolved the Saxon Heptarchy, and united the ſeveral kingdoms under his dominion.

THE KINGDOM OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

ADELFRID, king of Bernicia, having married Acca, the daughter of Ælla king of Deïri, and expelled her infant brother, Edwin, had united all the counties

counties north of Humber into one monarchy, and acquired a great aſcendant in the Heptarchy. He alſo ſpread the terror of the Saxon arms to the neighbouring people; and by his victories over the Scots and Picts, as well as Welſh, extended on all ſides the bounds of his dominions. Having laid ſiege to Chester, the Britons marched out with all their forces to engage him; and they were attended by a body of 1250 monks from the monaſtery of Bangor, who ſtood at a ſmall diſtance from the field of battle, in order to encourage the combatants by their preſence and exhortations. Adelfrid inquiring the purpoſe of this unuſual appearance, was told, that theſe prieſts had come to pray againſt him: *Then are they as much our enemies*, ſaid he, *as thoſe who intend to fight againſt us*: And he immediately ſent a detachment, who fell upon them, and did ſuch execution, that only fifty eſcaped with their lives. The Britons, aſtoniſhed at this event, received a total defeat: Cheſter was obliged to ſurrender: And Adelfrid, purſuing his victory, made himſelf maſter of Bangor, and entirely demoliſhed the monaſtery; a building ſo extenſive, that there was a mile's diſtance from one gate of it to another; and it contained two thouſand one hundred monks, who are ſaid to have been there maintained by their own labour.

Notwithſtanding Adelfrid's ſucceſs in war, he lived in inquietude on account of young Edwin, whom he had unjuſtly diſpoſſeſſed of the crown of Deïri. This prince, now grown to man's eſtate, wandered from place to place, in continual danger from the attempts of Adelfrid; and received at laſt protection in the court of Redwald, king of the Eaſt-Angles; where his engaging and gallant deportment procured him general eſteem and affection. Redwald, however, was ſtrongly ſolicited by the king of Northumberland to kill or deliver up his gueſt: Rich preſents were promiſed him if he would comply, and war denounced againſt him in caſe of his refuſal. After rejecting ſeveral meſſages of this kind, his generoſity began to yield to the motives of intereſt; and he retained the laſt ambaſſador till he ſhould come to a reſolution in a caſe of ſuch importance. Edwin, informed

formed of his friend's perplexity, was yet determined at all hazards to remain in East-Anglia; and thought that, if the protection of that court failed him, it were better to die than prolong a life so much exposed to the persecutions of his powerful rival. This confidence in Redwald's honour and friendship, with his other accomplishments, engaged the queen on his side; and she effectually represented to her husband the infamy of delivering up to certain destruction their royal guest, who had fled to them for protection against his cruel and jealous enemies. Redwald, embracing more generous resolutions, thought it safest to prevent Adelfrid, before that prince was aware of his intention, and to attack him while he was yet unprepared for defence. He marched suddenly with an army into the kingdom of Northumberland, and fought a battle with Adelfrid; in which that monarch was defeated and killed, after avenging himself by the death of Regner, son of Redwald. His own sons, Eanfrid, Oswald, and Oswy, yet infants, were carried into Scotland; and Edwin obtained possession of the crown of Northumberland.

Edwin was the greatest prince of the Heptarchy in that age, and distinguished himself, both by his influence over the other kingdoms, and by the strict execution of justice in his own dominions. He reclaimed his subjects from the licentious life to which they had been accustomed; and it was a common saying, that during his reign a woman or child might openly carry everywhere a purse of gold, without any danger of violence or robbery. There is a remarkable instance, transmitted to us, of the affection borne him by his servants. Cuichelme, king of Wessex, was his enemy; but finding himself unable to maintain open war against so gallant and powerful a prince, he determined to use treachery against him, and he employed one Eumer for that criminal purpose. The assassin having obtained admittance, by pretending to deliver a message from Cuichelme, drew his dagger, and rushed upon the king. Lilla, an officer of his army, seeing his master's danger, and having no other means of defence, interposed with his own body between

between the king and Eumer's dagger, which was puſhed with ſuch violence, that, after piercing Lilla, it even wounded Edwin: But before the aſſaſſin could renew his blow, he was diſpatched by the king's attendants.

The Eaſt-Angles conſpired againſt Redwald, their king; and having put him to death, they offered their crown to Edwin, of whoſe valour and capacity they had had experience while he reſided among them. But Edwin, from a ſenſe of gratitude towards his benefactor, obliged them to ſubmit to Earpwold, the ſon of Redwald; and that prince preſerved his authority, though on a precarious footing, under the protection of the Northumbrian monarch.

Edwin, after his acceſſion to the crown, married Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert king of Kent. This princeſs, emulating the glory of her mother Bertha, who had been the inſtrument for converting her huſband and his people to Chriſtianity, carried Paullinus, a learned biſhop, along with her; and beſides ſtipulating a toleration for the exerciſe of her own religion, which was readily granted her, ſhe uſed every reaſon to perſuade the king to embrace it. Edwin, like a prudent prince, heſitated on the propoſal; but promiſed to examine the foundations of that doctrine; and declared that, if he found them ſatisfactory, he was willing to be converted. Accordingly he held ſeveral conferences with Paullinus; canvaſſed the arguments propounded with the wiſeſt of his counſellors; retired frequently from company, in order to revolve alone that important queſtion; and, after a ſerious and long inquiry, declared in favour of the Chriſtian religion: The people ſoon after imitated his example. Beſides the authority and influence of the king, they were moved by another ſtriking example. Coifi, the high-prieſt, being converted after a public conference with Paullinus, led the way in deſtroying the images, which he had ſo long worſhipped, and was forward in making this atonement for his paſt idolatry.

This able prince periſhed with his ſon, Oſfrid, in a great battle which he fought againſt Penda king of Mercia,

Mercia, and Cædwalla king of the Britons. That event, which happened in the forty-eighth year of Edwin's age and seventeenth of his reign, divided the monarchy of Northumberland, which that prince had united in his person. Eanfrid, the son of Adelfrid, returned with his brothers Oswald and Oswy, from Scotland, and took possession of Bernicia, his paternal kingdom: Osric, Edwin's cousin-german, established himself in Deïri, the inheritance of his family; but to which the sons of Edwin had a preferable title. Eanfrid, the elder surviving son, fled to Penda, by whom he was treacherously slain. The younger son, Vuscfræa, with Yffi, the grandson of Edwin, by Osfrid, sought protection in Kent, and not finding themselves in safety there, retired into France to king Dagobert, where they died.

Osric king of Deïri, and Eanfrid of Bernicia, returned to paganism; and the whole people seem to have returned with them; since Paullinus, who was the first archbishop of York, and who had converted them, thought proper to retire with Ethelburga, the queen dowager, into Kent. Both these Northumbrian kings perished soon after, the first in battle against Cædwalla, the Briton; the second, by the treachery of that prince. Oswald, the brother of Eanfrid, of the race of Bernicia, united again the kingdom of Northumberland in the year 634, and restored the Christian religion in his dominions. He gained a bloody and well-disputed battle against Cædwalla; the last vigorous effort which the Britons made against the Saxons. Oswald is much celebrated for his sanctity and charity by the monkish historians; and they pretend that his reliques wrought miracles, particularly the curing of a sick horse, which had approached the place of his interment.

He died in battle against Penda king of Mercia, and was succeeded by his brother Oswy; who established himself in the government of the whole Northumbrian kingdom, by putting to death Oswin, the son of Osric, the last king of the race of Deïri. His son Egfrid succeeded him; who perished in battle against the Picts, without leaving

leaving any children, becauſe Adelthrid, his wife, refuſed to violate her vow of chaſtity. Alfred, his natural brother, acquired poſſeſſion of the kingdom, which he governed for nineteen years; and he left it to Oſred, his ſon, a boy of eight years of age. This prince, after a reign of eleven years, was murdered by Kenred his kinſman, who, after enjoying the crown only a year, periſhed by a like fate. Oſric, and after him Celwulph the ſon of Kenred, next mounted the throne, which the latter relinquiſhed in the year 738, in favour of Eadbert his couſin-german, who, imitating his predeceſſor, abdicated the crown, and retired into a monaſtery. Oſwolf, ſon of Eadbert, was ſlain in a ſedition, a year after his acceſſion to the crown; and Mollo, who was not of the royal family, ſeized the crown. He periſhed by the treachery of Ailred, a prince of the blood; and Ailred, having ſucceeded in his deſign upon the throne, was ſoon after expelled by his ſubjects. Ethelred, his ſucceſſor, the ſon of Mollo, underwent a like fate. Celwold, the next king, the brother of Ailred, was depoſed and ſlain by the people, and his place was filled by Oſred, his nephew, who, after a ſhort reign of a year, made way for Ethelbert, another ſon of Mollo, whoſe death was equally tragical with that of almoſt all his predeceſſors. After Ethelbert's death an univerſal anarchy prevailed in Northumberland; and the people having, by ſo many fatal revolutions, loſt all attachment to their government and princes, were well prepared for ſubjection to a foreign yoke; which Egbert, king of Weſſex, finally impoſed upon them.

THE KINGDOM OF EAST-ANGLIA.

THE hiſtory of this kingdom contains nothing memorable, except the converſion of Earpwold, the fourth king, and great-grandſon of Uffa, the founder of the monarchy. The authority of Edwin king of Northumberland, on whom that prince entirely depended, engaged him to take this ſtep: But ſoon after, his

his wife, who was an idolatreſs, brought him back to her religion; and he was found unable to reſiſt thoſe allurements which had ſeduced the wiſeſt of mankind. After his death, which was violent, like that of moſt of the Saxon princes that did not early retire into monaſteries, Sigebert, his ſucceſſor, and half-brother, who had been educated in France, reſtored Chriſtianity, and introduced learning among the Eaſt-Angles. Some pretend that he founded the univerſity of Cambridge, or rather ſome ſchools in that place. It is almoſt impoſſible, and quite needleſs, to be more particular in relating the tranſactions of the Eaſt-Angles. What inſtruction or entertainment can it give the reader, to hear a long beadroll of barbarous names, Egric, Annas, Ethelbert, Ethelwald, Aldulf, Elfwold, Beorne, Ethelred, Ethelbert, who ſucceſſively murdered, expelled, or inherited from each other, and obſcurely filled the throne of that kingdom? Ethelbert, the laſt of theſe princes, was treacherouſly murdered by Offa king of Mercia, in the year 792, and his ſtate was thenceforth united with that of Offa, as we ſhall relate preſently.

THE KINGDOM OF MERCIA.

MERCIA, the largeſt, if not the moſt powerful, kingdom of the Heptarchy, comprehended all the middle counties of England; and as its frontiers extended to thoſe of all the other ſix kingdoms, as well as to Wales, it received its name from that circumſtance. Wibba, the ſon of Crida, founder of the monarchy, being placed on the throne by Ethelbert king of Kent, governed his paternal dominions by a precarious authority; and after his death, Ceorl, his kinſman, was, by the influence of the Kentiſh monarch, preferred to his ſon Penda, whoſe turbulent character appeared dangerous to that prince. Penda was thus fifty years of age before he mounted the throne; and his temerity and reſtleſs diſpoſition were found nowiſe abated by time, experience, or reflection. He engaged in continual hoſtilities againſt

all the neighbouring ſtates; and by his injuſtice and violence rendered himſelf equally odious to his own ſubjects and to ſtrangers. Sigebert, Egric, and Annas, three kings of Eaſt-Anglia, periſhed ſucceſſively in battle againſt him; as did alſo Edwin and Oſwald, the two greateſt princes that had reigned over Northumberland. At laſt, Oſwy, brother to Oſwald, having defeated and ſlain him in a deciſive battle, freed the world from this ſanguinary tyrant. Peada, his ſon, mounted the throne of Mercia in 655, and lived under the protection of Oſwy, whoſe daughter he had eſpouſed. This princeſs was educated in the Chriſtian faith, and ſhe employed her influence with ſucceſs, in converting her huſband and his ſubjects to that religion. Thus the fair ſex have had the merit of introducing the Chriſtian doctrine into all the moſt conſiderable kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy. Peada died a violent death *. His ſon, Wolfhere, ſucceeded to the government; and, after having reduced to dependence the kingdoms of Eſſex and Eaſt-Anglia, he left the crown to his brother Ethelred, who, though a lover of peace, ſhowed himſelf not unfit for military enterpriſes. Beſides making a ſucceſsful expedition into Kent, he repulſed Egfrid king of Northumberland, who had invaded his dominions; and he ſlew in battle Elfwin, the brother of that prince. Deſirous, however, of compoſing all animoſities with Egfrid, he paid him a ſum of money as a compenſation for the loſs of his brother. After a proſperous reign of thirty years, he reſigned the crown to Kendred, ſon of Wolfhere, and retired into the monaſtery of Bardney. Kendred returned the preſent of the crown to Ceolred, the ſon of Ethelred; and making a pilgrimage to Rome, paſſed his life there in penance and devotion. The place of Ceolred was ſupplied by Ethelbald, great-grand-nephew to Penda, by Alwy, his brother; and this prince

* Hugo Candidus, p. 4. ſays that he was treacherouſly murdered by his queen, by whoſe perſuaſion he had embraced Chriſtianity; but this account of the matter is found in that hiſtorian alone.

being ſlain in a mutiny, was ſucceeded by Offa, who was a degree more remote from Penda, by Eawa, another brother.

This prince, who mounted the throne in 755, had ſome great qualities, and was ſucceſsful in his warlike enterpriſes againſt Lothaire king of Kent, and Kenwulph king of Weſſex. He defeated the former in a bloody battle at Otford upon the Darent, and reduced his kingdom to a ſtate of dependence: He gained a victory over the latter at Benſington in Oxfordſhire; and conquering that county, together with that of Glouceſter, annexed both to his dominions. But all theſe ſucceſſes were ſtained by his treacherous murder of Ethelbert king of the Eaſt-Angles, and his violent ſeizing of that kingdom. This young prince, who is ſaid to have poſſeſſed great merit, had paid his addreſſes to Elfrida, the daughter of Offa, and was invited with all his retinue to Hereford, in order to ſolemnize the nuptials: Amidſt the joy and feſtivity of theſe entertainments, he was ſeized by Offa, and ſecretly beheaded: And though Elfrida, who abhorred her father's treachery, had time to give warning to the Eaſt-Anglian nobility, who eſcaped into their own country, Offa, having extinguiſhed the royal family, ſucceeded in his deſign of ſubduing that kingdom. The perfidious prince, deſirous of reeſtabliſhing his character in the world, and perhaps of appeaſing the remorſes of his own conſcience, paid great court to the clergy, and practiſed all the monkiſh devotion ſo much eſteemed in that ignorant and ſuperſtitious age. He gave the tenth of his goods to the church; beſtowed rich donations on the cathedral of Hereford, and even made a pilgrimage to Rome, where his great power and riches could not fail of procuring him the papal abſolution. The better to ingratiate himſelf with the ſovereign pontiff, he engaged to pay him a yearly donation for the ſupport of an Engliſh college at Rome, and in order to raiſe the ſum, he impoſed the tax of a penny on each houſe poſſeſſed of thirty pence a year. This impoſition, being afterwards levied on all England, was commonly denominated Peter's pence; and though

conferred

conferred at firſt as a gift, was afterwards claimed as a tribute by the Roman pontiff. Carrying his hypocriſy ſtill farther, Offa, feigning to be directed by a viſion from heaven, diſcovered at Verulam the reliques of St. Alban the martyr, and endowed a magnificent monaſtery in that place. Moved by all theſe acts of piety, Malmeſbury, one of the beſt of the old Engliſh hiſtorians, declares himſelf at a loſs to determine whether the merits or crimes of this prince preponderated. Offa died, after a reign of thirty-nine years, in 794.

This prince was become ſo conſiderable in the Heptarchy, that the emperor Charlemagne entered into an alliance and friendſhip with him; a circumſtance which did honour to Offa; as diſtant princes at that time had uſually little communication with each other. That emperor being a great lover of learning and learned men, in an age very barren of that ornament, Offa, at his deſire, ſent him over Alcuin, a clergyman much celebrated for his knowledge, who received great honours from Charlemagne, and even became his preceptor in the ſciences. The chief reaſon why he had at firſt deſired the company of Alcuin, was, that he might oppoſe his learning to the hereſy of Felix, biſhop of Urgil in Catalonia; who maintained, that Jeſus Chriſt, conſidered in his human nature, could, more properly, be denominated the adoptive, than the natural, ſon of God. This hereſy was condemned in the council of Francfort, held in 794, and conſiſting of 300 biſhops. Such were the queſtions which were agitated in that age, and which employed the attention not only of cloiſtered ſcholars, but of the wiſeſt and greateſt princes *.

Egfrith ſucceeded to his father, Offa, but ſurvived him only five months; when he made way for Kenulph, a deſcendant of the royal family. This prince waged war againſt Kent; and taking Egbert, the king, pri-

* Offa, in order to protect his country from Wales, drew a rampart or ditch of a hundred miles in length, from Baſinwerke in Flintſhire, to the ſouth ſea near Briſtol. See *Speed's Deſcription of Wales.*

ſoner, he cut off his hands, and put out his eyes; leaving Cuthred, his own brother, in poſſeſſion of the crown of that kingdom. Kenulph was killed in an inſurrection of the Eaſt-Anglians, whoſe crown his predeceſſor, Offa, had uſurped. He left his ſon, Kenelm, a minor; who was murdered the ſame year by his ſiſter, Quendrade, who had entertained the ambitious views of aſſuming the government. But ſhe was ſupplanted by her uncle, Ceolulf; who, two years after, was dethroned by Beornulf. The reign of this uſurper, who was not of the royal family, was ſhort and unfortunate: He was defeated by the Weſt-Saxons, and killed by his own ſubjects, the Eaſt-Angles. Ludican, his ſucceſſor, underwent the ſame fate; and Wiglaff, who mounted this unſtable throne, and found every thing in the utmoſt confuſion, could not withſtand the fortune of Egbert, who united all the Saxon kingdoms into one great monarchy.

THE KINGDOM OF ESSEX.

THIS kingdom made no great figure in the Heptarchy; and the hiſtory of it is very imperfect. Sleda ſucceeded to his father, Erkinwin, the founder of the monarchy; and made way for his ſon, Sebert, who, being nephew to Ethelbert king of Kent, was perſuaded by that prince to embrace the Chriſtian faith. His ſons and conjunct ſucceſſors, Sexted and Seward, relapſed into idolatry, and were ſoon after ſlain in a battle againſt the Weſt-Saxons. To ſhew the rude manner of living in that age, Bede tells us, that theſe two kings expreſſed great deſire to eat the white bread, diſtributed by Mellitus, the biſhop, at the communion. But on his refuſing them, unleſs they would ſubmit to be baptized, they expelled him their dominions. The names of the other princes who reigned ſucceſſively in Eſſex, are Sigebert the little, Sigebert the good, who reſtored Chriſtianity, Swithelm, Sigheri, Offa. This laſt prince having made a vow of chaſtity, notwithſtanding his marriage with Keneſwitha, a Mercian princeſs, daughter to Penda,

Penda, went in pilgrimage to Rome, and ſhut himſelf up during the reſt of his life in a cloiſter. Selred, his ſucceſſor, reigned thirty-eight years; and was the laſt of the royal line: The failure of which threw the kingdom into great confuſion, and reduced it to dependence under Mercia. Switherd firſt acquired the crown, by the conceſſion of the Mercian princes; and his death made way for Sigeric, who ended his life in a pilgrimage to Rome. His ſucceſſor, Sigered, unable to defend his kingdom, ſubmitted to the victorious arms of Egbert.

THE KINGDOM OF SUSSEX.

THE hiſtory of this kingdom, the ſmalleſt in the Heptarchy, is ſtill more imperfect than that of Eſſex. Ælla, the founder of the monarchy, left the crown to his ſon, Ciſſa, who is chiefly remarkable for his long reign of ſeventy-ſix years. During his time, the South-Saxons fell almoſt into a total dependence on the kingdom of Weſſex; and we ſcarcely know the names of the princes who were poſſeſſed of this titular ſovereignty. Adelwalch, the laſt of them, was ſubdued in battle by Ceadwalla king of Weſſex, and was ſlain in the action; leaving two infant ſons, who falling into the hand of the conqueror, were murdered by him. The abbot of Retford oppoſed the order for this execution; but could only prevail on Ceadwalla to ſuſpend it till they ſhould be baptized. Berćthun and Audhun, two noblemen of character, reſiſted ſome time the violence of the Weſt-Saxons; but their oppoſition ſerved only to prolong the miſeries of their country; and the ſubduing of this kingdom was the firſt ſtep which the Weſt-Saxons made towards acquiring the ſole monarchy of England.

THE KINGDOM OF WESSEX.

THE kingdom of Weſſex, which finally ſwallowed up all the other Saxon ſtates, met with great reſiſtance on its firſt eſtabliſhment: And the Britons, who

were now enured to arms, yielded not tamely their poſſeſſions to thoſe invaders. Cerdic, the founder of the monarchy, and his ſon, Kenric, fought many ſucceſsful and ſome unſucceſsful battles againſt the natives; and the martial ſpirit, common to all the Saxons, was, by means of theſe hoſtilities, carried to the greateſt height among this tribe. Ceaulin, who was the ſon and ſucceſſor of Kenric, and who began his reign in 560, was ſtill more ambitious and enterpriſing than his predeceſſors; and, by waging continual war againſt the Britons, he added a great part of the counties of Devon and Somerſet to his other dominions. Carried along by the tide of ſucceſs, he invaded the other Saxon ſtates in his neighbourhood, and becoming terrible to all, he provoked a general confederacy againſt him. This alliance proved ſucceſsful under the conduct of Ethelbert king of Kent; and Ceaulin, who had loſt the affections of his own ſubjects by his violent diſpoſition, and had now fallen into contempt from his misfortunes, was expelled the throne, and died in exile and miſery. Cuichelme and Cuthwin, his ſons, governed jointly the kingdom, till the expulſion of the latter in 591, and the death of the former in 593, made way for Cealric, to whom ſucceeded Ceobald in 593, by whoſe death, which happened in 611, Kynegils inherited the crown. This prince embraced Chriſtianity, through the perſuaſion of Oſwald king of Northumberland, who had married his daughter, and who had attained a great aſcendant in the Heptarchy. Kenwalch next ſucceeded to the monarchy, and dying in 672, left the ſucceſſion ſo much diſputed, that Sexburga, his widow, a woman of ſpirit, kept poſſeſſion of the government till her death, which happened two years after. Eſcwin then peaceably acquired the crown; and, after a ſhort reign of two years, made way for Kentwin, who governed nine years. Ceodwalla, his ſucceſſor, mounted not the throne without oppoſition; but proved a great prince, according to the ideas of thoſe times; that is, he was enterpriſing, warlike, and ſucceſsful. He entirely ſubdued the kingdom of Suſſex, and annexed it to his own dominions. He made

made inroads into Kent; but met with reſiſtance from Widred, the king, who proved ſucceſsful againſt Mollo, brother to Ceodwalla, and ſlew him in a ſkirmiſh. Ceodwalla, at laſt, tired with wars and bloodſhed, was ſeized with a fit of devotion; beſtowed ſeveral endowments on the church; and made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he received baptiſm, and died in 689. Ina, his ſucceſſor, inherited the military virtues of Ceodwalla, and added to them the more valuable ones of juſtice, policy, and prudence. He made war upon the Britons in Somerſet; and having finally ſubdued that province, he treated the vanquiſhed with a humanity hitherto unknown to the Saxon conquerors. He allowed the proprietors to retain poſſeſſion of their lands, encouraged marriages and alliances between them and his ancient ſubjects, and gave them the privilege of being governed by the ſame laws. Theſe laws he augmented and aſcertained; and though he was diſturbed by ſome inſurrections at home, his long reign of thirty-ſeven years may be regarded as one of the moſt glorious and moſt proſperous of the Heptarchy. In the decline of his age he made a pilgrimage to Rome; and after his return, ſhut himſelf up in a cloiſter, where he died.

Though the kings of Weſſex had always been princes of the blood, deſcended from Cerdic, the founder of the monarchy, the order of ſucceſſion had been far from exact; and a more remote prince had often found means to mount the throne, in preference to one deſcended from a nearer branch of the royal family. Ina, therefore, having no children of his own, and lying much under the influence of Ethelburga, his queen, left by will the ſucceſſion to Adelard, her brother, who was his remote kinſman: But this deſtination did not take place without ſome difficulty. Oſwald, a prince more nearly allied to the crown, took arms againſt Adelard; but he being ſuppreſſed, and dying ſoon after, the title of Adelard was not any farther diſputed; and in the year 741, he was ſucceeded by his couſin, Cudred. The reign of this prince was diſtinguiſhed by a great victory which he obtained, by means of Edelhun, his general, over

over Ethelbald king of Mercia. His death made way for Sigebert, his kinſman, who governed ſo ill, that his people roſe in an inſurrection, and dethroned him, crowning Cenulph in his ſtead. The exiled prince found a refuge with duke Cumbran, governor of Hampſhire; who, that he might add new obligations to Sigebert, gave him many ſalutary counſels for his future conduct, accompained with ſome reprehenſions for the paſt. But theſe were ſo much reſented by the ungrateful prince, that he conſpired againſt the life of his protector, and treacherouſly murdered him. After this infamous action, he was forſaken by all the world; and ſkulking about in the wilds and foreſts, was at laſt diſcovered by a ſervant of Cumbran's, who inſtantly took revenge upon him for the murder of his maſter.

Cenulph, who had obtained the crown on the expulſion of Sigebert, was fortunate in many expeditions againſt the Britons of Cornwal; but afterwards loſt ſome reputation by his ill ſucceſs againſt Offa king of Mercia. Kynehard alſo, brother to the depoſed Sigebert, gave him diſturbance; and though expelled the kingdom, he hovered on the frontiers, and watched an opportunity for attacking his rival. The king had an intrigue with a young woman who lived at Merton in Surry, whither having ſecretly retired, he was on a ſudden environed, in the night-time, by Kynehard and his followers, and after making a vigorous reſiſtance, was murdered, with all his attendants. The nobility and people of the neighbourhood, riſing next day in arms, took revenge on Kynehard for the ſlaughter of their king, and put every one to the ſword who had been engaged in that criminal enterpriſe. This event happened in 784.

Brithric next obtained poſſeſſion of the government, though remotely deſcended from the royal family; but he enjoyed not that dignity without inquietude. Eoppa, nephew to king Ina, by his brother Ingild, who died before that prince, had begot Eta, father to Alchmond, from whom ſprung Egbert, a young man of the moſt promiſing hopes, who gave great jealouſy to Brithric, the reigning

reigning prince, both becauſe he ſeemed by his birth better intitled to the crown, and becauſe he had acquired, to an eminent degree, the affections of the people. Egbert, ſenſible of his danger from the ſuſpicions of Brithric, ſecretly withdrew into France; where he was well received by Charlemagne. By living in the court, and ſerving in the armies of that prince, the moſt able and moſt generous that had appeared in Europe during ſeveral ages, he acquired thoſe accompliſhments, which afterwards enabled him to make ſuch a ſhining figure on the throne. And familiarizing himſelf to the manners of the French, who, as Malmeſbury obſerves, were eminent both for valour and civility above all the weſtern nations, he learned to poliſh the rudeneſs and barbarity of the Saxon character: His early misfortunes thus proved of ſingular advantage to him.

It was not long ere Egbert had opportunities of diſplaying his natural and acquired talents. Brithric king of Weſſex had married Eadburga, natural daughter of Offa king of Mercia, a profligate woman, equally infamous for cruelty and for incontinence. Having great influence over her huſband, ſhe often inſtigated him to deſtroy ſuch of the nobility as were obnoxious to her; and where this expedient failed, ſhe ſcrupled not being herſelf active in traiterous attempts againſt them. She had mixed a cup of poiſon for a young nobleman, who had acquired her huſband's friendſhip, and had on that account become the object of her jealouſy: But, unfortunately, the king drank of the fatal cup along with his favourite, and ſoon after expired. This tragical incident, joined to her other crimes, rendered Eadburga ſo odious, that ſhe was obliged to fly into France; whence Egbert was at the ſame time recalled by the nobility, in order to aſcend the throne of his anceſtors. He attained that dignity in the laſt year of the eighth century.

In the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, an exact rule of ſucceſſion was either unknown or not ſtrictly obſerved; and thence the reigning prince was continually agitated with jealouſy againſt all the princes of the blood, whom he

he ſtill conſidered as rivals, and whoſe death alone could give him entire ſecurity in his poſſeſſion of the throne. From this fatal cauſe, together with the admiration of the monaſtic life, and the opinion of merit attending the preſervation of chaſtity even in a married ſtate, the royal families had been entirely extinguiſhed in all the kingdoms except that of Weſſex; and the emulations, ſuſpicions, and conſpiracies, which had formerly been confined to the princes of the blood alone, were now diffuſed among all the nobility in the ſeveral Saxon ſtates. Egbert was the ſole deſcendant of thoſe firſt conquerors who ſubdued Britain, and who enhanced their authority by claiming a pedigree from Woden, the ſupreme divinity of their anceſtors. But that prince, though invited by this favourable circumſtance to make attempts on the neighbouring Saxons, gave them for ſome time no diſturbance, and rather choſe to turn his arms againſt the Britons in Cornwal, whom he defeated in ſeveral battles. He was recalled from the conqueſt of that country by an invaſion made upon his dominions by Bernulf king of Mercia.

The Mercians, before the acceſſion of Egbert, had very nearly attained the abſolute ſovereignty in the Heptarchy: They had reduced the Eaſt-Angles under ſubjection, and eſtabliſhed tributary princes in the kingdoms of Kent and Eſſex. Northumberland was involved in anarchy; and no ſtate of any conſequence remained but that of Weſſex, which, much inferior in extent to Mercia, was ſupported ſolely by the great qualities of its ſovereign. Egbert led his army againſt the invaders; and encountering them at Ellandum in Wiltſhire, obtained a complete victory, and by the great ſlaughter which he made of them in their flight, gave a mortal blow to the power of the Mercians. Whilſt he himſelf, in proſecution of his victory, entered their country on the ſide of Oxfordſhire, and threatened the heart of their dominions; he ſent an army into Kent, commanded by Ethelwolph, his eldeſt ſon; and expelling Baldred, the tributary king, ſoon made himſelf maſter of that country. The kingdom of Eſſex was conquered with

with equal facility; and the East-Angles, from their hatred to the Mercian government, which had been eſtabliſhed over them by treachery and violence, and probably exerciſed with tyranny, immediately roſe in arms, and craved the protection of Egbert. Bernulf, the Mercian king, who marched againſt them, was defeated and ſlain; and two years after, Ludican, his ſucceſſor, met with the ſame fate. Theſe inſurrections and calamities facilitated the enterpriſes of Egbert, who advanced into the centre of the Mercian territories, and made eaſy conqueſts over a diſpirited and divided people. In order to engage them more eaſily to ſubmiſſion, he allowed Wiglef, their countryman, to retain the title of king, whilſt he himſelf exerciſed the real powers of ſovereignty. The anarchy which prevailed in Northumberland, tempted him to carry ſtill farther his victorious arms; and the inhabitants, unable to reſiſt his power, and deſirous of poſſeſſing ſome eſtabliſhed form of government, were forward, on his firſt appearance, to ſend deputies, who ſubmitted to his authority, and ſwore allegiance to him as their ſovereign. Egbert, however, ſtill allowed to Northumberland, as he had done to Mercia and East-Anglia, the power of electing a king, who paid him tribute, and was dependent on him.

Thus were united all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy in one great ſtate, near four hundred years after the firſt arrival of the Saxons in Britain; and the fortunate arms and prudent policy of Egbert at laſt effected, what had been ſo often attempted in vain by ſo many princes. Kent, Northumberland, and Mercia, which had ſucceſſively aſpired to general dominion, were now incorporated in his empire; and the other ſubordinate kingdoms ſeemed willingly to ſhare the ſame fate. His territories were nearly of the ſame extent with what is now properly called England; and a favourable proſpect was afforded to the Anglo-Saxons, of eſtabliſhing a civilized monarchy, poſſeſſed of tranquillity within itſelf, and ſecure againſt foreign invaſion. This great event happened in the year 827.

The

The Saxons, though they had been ſo long ſettled in the iſland, ſeem not as yet to have been much improved beyond their German anceſtors either in arts, civility, knowledge, humanity, juſtice, or obedience to the laws. Even Chriſtianity, though it opened the way to connexions between them and the more poliſhed ſtates of Europe, had not hitherto been very effectual in baniſhing their ignorance, or ſoftening their barbarous manners. As they received that doctrine through the corrupted channels of Rome, it carried along with it a great mixture of credulity and ſuperſtition, equally deſtructive to the underſtanding and to morals. The reverence towards ſaints and reliques ſeems to have almoſt ſupplanted the adoration of the Supreme Being. Monaſtic obſervances were eſteemed more meritorious than the active virtues: The knowledge of natural cauſes was neglected from the univerſal belief of miraculous interpoſitions and judgments: Bounty to the church atoned for every violence againſt ſociety: And the remorſes for cruelty, murder, treachery, aſſaſſination, and the more robuſt vices, were appeaſed, not by amendment of life, but by penances, ſervility to the monks, and an abject and illiberal devotion *. The reverence for the clergy had been carried to ſuch a height, that, wherever a perſon appeared in a ſacerdotal habit, though on the highway, the people flocked around him; and ſhewing him all marks of profound reſpect, received every word he uttered as the moſt ſacred oracle. Even the military virtues, ſo inherent in all the Saxon tribes,

* Theſe abuſes were common to all the European churches; but the prieſts in Italy, Spain, and Gaul, made ſome atonement for them by other advantages which they rendered ſociety. For ſeveral ages they were almoſt all Romans, or, in other words, the ancient natives; and they preſerved the Roman language and laws, with ſome remains of the former civility. But the prieſts in the Heptarchy, after the firſt miſſionaries, were wholly Saxons, and almoſt as ignorant and barbarous as the laity. They contributed, therefore, little to the improvement of the ſociety in knowledge or the arts.

began

began to be neglected; and the nobility, preferring the ſecurity and ſloth of the cloiſter to the tumults and glory of war, valued themſelves chiefly on endowing monaſteries, of which they aſſumed the government. The ſeveral kings too, being extremely impoveriſhed by continual benefactions to the church, to which the ſtates of their kingdoms had weakly aſſented, could beſtow no rewards on valour or military ſervices, and retained not even ſufficient influence to ſupport their government.

Another inconvenience which attended this corrupt ſpecies of Chriſtianity, was the ſuperſtitious attachment to Rome, and the gradual ſubjection of the kingdom to a foreign juriſdiction. The Britons, having never acknowledged any ſubordination to the Roman pontiff, had conducted all eccleſiaſtical government by their domeſtic ſynods and councils: But the Saxons, receiving their religion from Roman monks, were taught at the ſame time a profound reverence for that ſee, and were naturally led to regard it as the capital of their religion. Pilgrimages to Rome were repreſented as the moſt meritorious acts of devotion. Not only noblemen and ladies of rank undertook this tedious journey; but kings themſelves, abdicating their crowns, ſought for a ſecure paſſport to heaven at the feet of the Roman pontiff. New reliques, perpetually ſent from that endleſs mint of ſuperſtition, and magnified by lying miracles invented in convents, operated on the aſtoniſhed minds of the multitude. And every prince has attained the eulogies of the monks, the only hiſtorians of thoſe ages, not in proportion to his civil and military virtues, but to his devoted attachment towards their order, and his ſuperſtitious reverence for Rome.

The ſovereign pontiff, encouraged by this blindneſs and ſubmiſſive diſpoſition of the people, advanced every day in his encroachments on the independence of the Engliſh churches. Wilfrid biſhop of Lindisferne, the ſole prelate of the Northumbrian kingdom, increaſed this ſubjection in the eighth century, by his making an appeal to Rome againſt the deciſions of an Engliſh ſynod, which had abridged his dioceſe by the erection

of ſome new biſhoprics. Agatho, the pope, readily embraced this precedent of an appeal to his court; and Wilfrid, though the haughtieſt and moſt luxurious prelate of his age, having obtained with the people the character of ſanctity, was thus able to lay the foundation of this papal pretenſion.

The great topic by which Wilfrid confounded the imaginations of men was, that St. Peter, to whoſe cuſtody the keys of heaven were entruſted, would certainly refuſe admittance to every one who ſhould be wanting in reſpect to his ſucceſſor. This conceit, well ſuited to vulgar conceptions, made great impreſſion on the people during ſeveral ages; and has not even at preſent loſt all influence in the catholic countries.

Had this abject ſuperſtition produced general peace and tranquillity, it had made ſome atonement for the ills attending it; but beſides the uſual avidity of men for power and riches, frivolous controverſies in theology were engendered by it, which were ſo much the more fatal, as they admitted not, like the others, of any final determination from eſtabliſhed poſſeſſion. The diſputes excited in Britain, were of the moſt ridiculous kind, and entirely worthy of thoſe ignorant and barbarous ages. There were ſome intricacies, obſerved by all the Chriſtian churches, in adjuſting the day of keeping Eaſter; which depended on a complicated conſideration of the courſe of the ſun and moon: And it happened that the miſſionaries, who had converted the Scots and Britons, had followed a different calendar from that which was obſerved at Rome in the age when Auguſtine converted the Saxons. The prieſts alſo of all the Chriſtian churches were accuſtomed to ſhave part of their head; but the form given to this tonſure was different in the former, from what was practiſed in the latter. The Scots and Britons pleaded the antiquity of *their* uſages: The Romans, and their diſciples, the Saxons, inſiſted on the univerſality of *theirs*. That Eaſter muſt neceſſarily be kept by a rule, which comprehended both the day of the year and age of the moon, was agreed by all; that the tonſure of a prieſt could not be omitted

without the utmoſt impiety, was a point undiſputed: But the Romans and Saxons called their antagoniſts ſchiſmatics; becauſe they celebrated Eaſter on the very day of the full moon in March, if that day fell on a Sunday, inſtead of waiting till the Sunday following; and becauſe they ſhaved the fore-part of their head from ear to ear, inſtead of making that tonſure on the crown of the head, and in a circular form. In order to render their antagoniſts odious, they affirmed, that once in ſeven years they concurred with the Jews in the time of celebrating that feſtival: And that they might recommend their own form of tonſure, they maintained, that it imitated ſymbolically the crown of thorns worn by Chriſt in his paſſion; whereas the other form was invented by Simon Magus, without any regard to that repreſentation. Theſe controverſies had, from the beginning, excited ſuch animoſity between the Britiſh and Romiſh prieſts, that, inſtead of concurring in their endeavours to convert the idolatrous Saxons, they refuſed all communion together, and each regarded his opponent as no better than a Pagan. The diſpute laſted more than a century; and was at laſt finiſhed, not by men's diſcovering the folly of it, which would have been too great an effort for human reaſon to accompliſh, but by the entire prevalence of the Romiſh ritual over the Scotch and Britiſh. Wilfrid, biſhop of Lindisferne, acquired great merit, both with the court of Rome and with all the ſouthern Saxons, by expelling the quartodeciman ſchiſm, as it was called, from the Northumbrian kingdom, into which the neighbourhood of the Scots had formerly introduced it.

Theodore, archbiſhop of Canterbury, called, in the year 680, a ſynod at Hatfield, conſiſting of all the biſhops in Britain; where was accepted and ratified the decree of the Lateran council, ſummoned by Martin, againſt the hereſy of the Monothelites. The council and ſynod maintained, in oppoſition to theſe heretics, that, though the divine and human nature in Chriſt made but one perſon, yet had they different inclinations, wills, acts, and ſentiments, and that the unity of the

perſon implied not any unity in the conſciouſneſs. This opinion it ſeems ſomewhat difficult to comprehend; and no one, unacquainted with the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of thoſe ages, could imagine the height of zeal and violence with which it was then inculcated. The decree of the Lateran council calls the Monothelites impious, execrable, wicked, abominable, and even diabolical; and curſes and anathematizes them to all eternity.

The Saxons, from the firſt introduction of Chriſtianity among them, had admitted the uſe of images; and perhaps that religion, without ſome of thoſe exterior ornaments, had not made ſo quick a progreſs with theſe idolaters: But they had not paid any ſpecies of worſhip or addreſs to images; and this abuſe never prevailed among Chriſtians, till it received the ſanction of the ſecond council of Nice.

CHAP. II.

Egbert—Ethelwolf—Ethelbald and Ethelbert—Ethered—Alfred the Great—Edward the Elder—Athelſtan—Edmund—Edred—Edwy—Edgar—Edward the Martyr.

EGBERT.

(827.) THE kingdoms of the Heptarchy, though united by ſo recent a conqueſt, ſeemed to be firmly cemented into one ſtate under Egbert; and the inhabitants of the ſeveral provinces had loſt all deſire of revolting from that monarch, or of reſtoring their former independent governments. Their language was every-where nearly the ſame, their cuſtoms, laws, inſtitutions civil and religious; and as the race of the ancient kings was totally extinct in all the ſubjected ſtates, the people readily transferred their allegiance to a prince, who ſeemed to merit it, by the ſplendour of his victories, the vigour of his adminiſtration, and the ſuperior nobility

bility of his birth. A union also in government opened to them the agreeable prospect of future tranquillity; and it appeared more probable, that they would henceforth become formidable to their neighbours, than be exposed to their inroads and devastations. But these flattering views were soon overcast by the appearance of the Danes, who, during some centuries, kept the Anglo-Saxons in perpetual inquietude, committed the most barbarous ravages upon them, and at last reduced them to grievous servitude.

The emperor Charlemagne, though naturally generous and humane, had been induced by bigotry to exercise great severities upon the Pagan Saxons in Germany, whom he subdued; and besides often ravaging their country with fire and sword, he had in cool blood decimated all the inhabitants for their revolts, and had obliged them, by the most rigorous edicts, to make a seeming compliance with the Christian doctrine. That religion, which had easily made its way among the British Saxons by insinuation and address, appeared shocking to their German brethren, when imposed on them by the violence of Charlemagne; and the more generous and warlike of these Pagans had fled northward into Jutland, in order to escape the fury of his persecutions. Meeting there with a people of similar manners, they were readily received among them; and they soon stimulated the natives to concur in enterprises, which both promised revenge on the haughty conqueror, and afforded subsistence to those numerous inhabitants with which the northern countries were now overburthened. They invaded the provinces of France, which were exposed by the degeneracy and dissensions of Charlemagne's posterity; and being there known under the general name of Normans, which they received from their northern situation, they became the terror of all the maritime and even of the inland countries. They were also tempted to visit England in their frequent excursions; and being able, by sudden inroads, to make great progress over a people who were not defended by any naval force, who had relaxed their military institutions, and

who were ſunk into a ſuperſtition which had become odious to the Danes and ancient Saxons, they made no diſtinction in their hoſtilities between the French and Engliſh kingdoms. Their firſt appearance in this iſland was in the year 787, when Brithric reigned in Weſſex. A ſmall body of them landed in that kingdom, with a view of learning the ſtate of the country; and when the magiſtrate of the place queſtioned them concerning their enterpriſe, and ſummoned them to appear before the king, and account for their intentions, they killed him, and flying to their ſhips, eſcaped into their own country. The next alarm was given to Northumberland in the year 794; when a body of theſe pirates pillaged a monaſtery; but their ſhips being much damaged by a ſtorm, and their leader ſlain in a ſkirmiſh, they were at laſt defeated by the inhabitants, and the remainder of them put to the ſword. (832.) Five years after Egbert had eſtabliſhed his monarchy over England, the Danes landed in the Iſle of Shepey, and having pillaged it, eſcaped with impunity. They were not ſo fortunate in their next year's enterpriſe, when they diſembarked from thirty-five ſhips, and were encountered by Egbert, at Charmouth, in Dorſetſhire. The battle was bloody; but though the Danes loſt great numbers, they maintained the poſt which they had taken, and thence made good their retreat to their ſhips. Having learned, by experience, that they muſt expect a vigorous reſiſtance from this warlike prince, they entered into an alliance with the Britons of Cornwal; and landing two years after in that country, made an inroad with their confederates into the county of Devon; but were met at Hengeſdown by Egbert, and totally defeated. While England remained in this ſtate of anxiety, and defended itſelf more by temporary expedients than by any regular plan of adminiſtration, Egbert, who alone was able to provide effectually againſt this new evil, unfortunately died (838); and left the government to his ſon Ethelwolf.

ETHEL-

ETHELWOLF.

THIS prince had neither the abilities nor the vigour of his father; and was better qualified for governing a convent than a kingdom. He began his reign with making a partition of his dominions, and delivering over to his eldeſt ſon, Athelſtan, the new-conquered provinces of Eſſex, Kent, and Suſſex. But no inconveniencies ſeem to have ariſen from this partition; as the continual terror of the Daniſh invaſions prevented all domeſtic diſſenſion. A fleet of theſe ravagers, conſiſting of thirty-three ſail, appeared at Southampton; but were repulſed with loſs by Wolfhere, governor of the neighbouring county. The ſame year, Æthelhelm, governor of Dorſetſhire, routed another band which had diſembarked at Portſmouth; but he obtained the victory after a furious engagement, and he bought it with the loſs of his life. Next year the Danes made ſeveral inroads into England; and fought battles, or rather ſkirmiſhes, in Eaſt-Anglia, and Lindeſey, and Kent; where, though they were ſometimes repulſed and defeated, they always obtained their end, of committing ſpoil upon the country, and carrying off their booty. They avoided coming to a general engagement, which was not ſuited to their plan of operations. Their veſſels were ſmall, and ran eaſily up the creeks and rivers; where they drew them aſhore, and having formed an entrenchment round them, which they guarded with part of their number, the remainder ſcattered themſelves every-where, and carrying off the inhabitants and cattle and goods, they haſtened to their ſhips, and quickly diſappeared. If the military force of the county were aſſembled (for there was no time for troops to march from a diſtance), the Danes either were able to repulſe them, and to continue their ravages with impunity, or they betook themſelves to their veſſels; and ſetting ſail, ſuddenly invaded ſome diſtant quarter, which was not prepared for their reception. Every part of England was held in continual alarm; and the inhabitants

ants of one county durſt not give aſſiſtance to thoſe of another, leſt their own families and property ſhould in the mean time be expoſed by their abſence to the fury of theſe barbarous ravagers. All orders of men were involved in this calamity; and the prieſts and monks, who had been commonly ſpared in the domeſtic quarrels of the Heptarchy, were the chief objects on which the Daniſh idolaters exerciſed their rage and animoſity. Every ſeaſon of the year was dangerous; and the abſence of the enemy was no reaſon why any man could eſteem himſelf a moment in ſafety.

Theſe incurſions had now become almoſt annual; when the Danes, encouraged by their ſucceſſes againſt France as well as England (for both kingdoms were alike expoſed to this dreadful calamity), invaded the laſt (851) in ſo numerous a body, as ſeemed to threaten it with univerſal ſubjection. But the Engliſh, more military than the Britons, whom, a few centuries before, they had treated with like violence, rouſed themſelves with a vigour proportioned to the exigency. Ceorle, governor of Devonſhire, fought a battle with one body of the Danes at Wiganburgh, and put them to rout with great ſlaughter. King Athelſtan attacked another at ſea near Sandwich, ſunk nine of their ſhips, and put the reſt to flight. A body of them, however, ventured, for the firſt time, to take up winter-quarters in England; and receiving in the ſpring a ſtrong reinforcement of their countrymen in 350 veſſels, they advanced from the Iſle of Thanet, where they had ſtationed themſelves; burnt the cities of London and Canterbury; and having put to flight Brichtric, who now governed Mercia under the title of King, they marched into the heart of Surrey, and laid every place waſte around them. Ethelwolf, impelled by the urgency of the danger, marched againſt them at the head of the Weſt-Saxons; and carrying with him his ſecond ſon, Ethelbald, gave them battle at Okely, and gained a bloody victory over them. This advantage procured but a ſhort reſpite to the Engliſh. The Danes ſtill maintained their ſettlement in the Iſle of Thanet; and being attacked by Ealher and Huda, governors

governors of Kent and Surrey, though defeated in the beginning of the action, they finally repulſed the aſſailants (853), and killed both the governors. They removed thence to the Iſle of Shepey; where they took up their winter-quarters, that they might farther extend their devaſtation and ravages.

This unſettled ſtate of England hindered not Ethelwolf from making a pilgrimage to Rome; whither he carried his fourth, and favourite ſon Alfred, then only ſix years of age. He paſſed there a twelvemonth in exerciſes of devotion; and failed not in that moſt eſſential part of devotion, liberality to the church of Rome. Beſides giving preſents to the more diſtinguiſhed eccleſiaſtics, he made a perpetual grant of three hundred mancuſes * a year to that ſee; one third to ſupport the lamps of St. Peter's, another thoſe of St. Paul's, a third to the pope himſelf. In his return home, he married Judith, daughter of the emperor Charles the Bald; but on his landing in England, he met with an oppoſition which he little looked for.

His eldeſt ſon, Athelſtan, being dead; Ethelbald, his ſecond, who had aſſumed the government, formed, in concert with many of the nobles, the project of excluding his father from a throne, which his weakneſs and ſuperſtition ſeem to have rendered him ſo ill-qualified to fill. The people were divided between the two princes; and a bloody civil war, joined to all the other calamities under which the Engliſh laboured, appeared inevitable; when Ethelwolf had the facility to yield to the greater part of his ſon's pretenſions. He made with him a partition of the kingdom; and taking to himſelf the eaſtern part, which was always at that time eſteemed the leaſt conſiderable, as well as the moſt expoſed, he delivered over to Ethelbald the ſovereignty of the weſtern. Immediately after, he ſummoned the ſtates of the whole kingdom, and with the ſame facility conferred a perpetual and important donation on the church.

The eccleſiaſtics, in thoſe days of ignorance, made rapid advances in the acquiſition of power and gran-

* A mancus was about the weight of our preſent half-crown.

deur;

deur; and inculcating the moſt abſurd and moſt intereſted doctrines, though they ſometimes met, from the contrary intereſts of the laity, with an oppoſition, which it required time and addreſs to overcome, they found no obſtacle in their reaſon or underſtanding. Not content with the donations of land made them by the Saxon princes and nobles, and with temporary oblations from the devotion of the people, they had caſt a wiſhful eye on a vaſt revenue, which they claimed as belonging to them, by a ſacred and indefeaſible title. However little verſed in the ſcriptures, they had been able to diſcover that, under the Jewiſh law, a tenth of all the produce of land was conferred on the prieſthood; and forgetting what they themſelves taught, that the moral part only of that law was obligatory on Chriſtians, they inſiſted, that that this donation conveyed a perpetual property, inherent by divine right in thoſe who officiated at the altar. During ſome centuries, the whole ſcope of ſermons and homilies was directed to this purpoſe; and one would have imagined, from the general tenor of theſe diſcourſes, that all the practical parts of Chriſtianity were compriſed in the exact and faithful payment of tithes to the clergy. Encouraged by their ſucceſs in inculcating theſe doctrines, they ventured farther than they were warranted even by the Levitical law, and pretended to draw the tenth of all induſtry, merchandiſe, wages of labourers, and pay of ſoldiers; nay, ſome canoniſts went ſo far as to affirm, that the clergy were entitled to the tithe of the profits made by courtezans in the exerciſe of their profeſſion. Though pariſhes had been inſtituted in England by Honorius archbiſhop of Canterbury, near two centuries before, the eccleſiaſtics had never yet been able to get poſſeſſion of the tithes: They therefore ſeized the preſent favourable opportunity of making that acquiſition; when a weak ſuperſtitious prince filled the throne, and when the people, diſcouraged by their loſſes from the Danes, and terrified with the fear of future invaſions, were ſuſceptible of any impreſſion which bore the appearance of religion. So meritorious was this conceſſion deemed by the Engliſh, that, truſting entirely to ſuper-

ſupernatural aſſiſtance, they neglected the ordinary means of ſafety; and agreed, even in the preſent deſperate extremity, that the revenues of the church ſhould be exempted from all burthens, though impoſed for national defence and ſecurity.

ETHELBALD AND ETHELBERT.

(857.) ETHELWOLF lived only two years after making this grant; and by his will he ſhared England between his two eldeſt ſons Ethelbald and Ethelbert; the weſt being aſſigned to the former; the eaſt to the latter. Ethelbald was a profligate prince; and marrying Judith, his mother-in-law, gave great offence to the people; but moved by the remonſtrances of Swithun biſhop of Wincheſter, he was at laſt prevailed on to divorce her. His reign was ſhort; and Ethelbert his brother, ſucceeding to the government (860), behaved himſelf, during a reign of five years, in a manner more worthy of his birth and ſtation. The kingdom, however, was ſtill infeſted by the Danes, who made an inroad and ſacked Wincheſter; but were there defeated. A body alſo of theſe pirates, who were quartered in the Iſle of Thanet, having deceived the Engliſh by a treaty, unexpectedly broke into Kent, and committed great outrages.

ETHERED.

(866.) ETHELBERT was ſucceeded by his brother Ethered, who, though he defended himſelf with bravery, enjoyed, during his whole reign, no tranquillity from thoſe Daniſh irruptions. His younger brother, Alfred, ſeconded him in all his enterpriſes; and generouſly ſacrificed to the public good all reſentment which he might entertain on account of his being excluded by Ethered from a large patrimony which had been left him by his father.

The firſt landing of the Danes in the reign of Ethered was among the Eaſt-Angles, who, more anxious for their preſent ſafety than for the common intereſt, entered into

into a ſeparate treaty with the enemy; and furniſhed them with horſes, which enabled them to make an irruption by land into the kingdom of Northumberland. They there ſeized the city of York; and defended it againſt Oſbricht and Ælla, two Northumbrian princes, who periſhed in the aſſault. Encouraged by theſe ſucceſſes, and by the ſuperiority which they had acquired in arms, they now ventured, under the command of Hinguar and Hubba, to leave the ſea-coaſt, and penetrating into Mercia, they took up their winter-quarters at Nottingham, where they threatened the kingdom with a final ſubjection. The Mercians, in this extremity, applied to Ethered for ſuccour; and that prince, with his brother Alfred, conducting a great army to Nottingham, obliged the enemy to diſlodge, and to retreat into Northumberland (870). Their reſtleſs diſpoſition, and their avidity for plunder, allowed them not to remain long in thoſe quarters: They broke into Eaſt-Anglia, defeated and took priſoner Edmund the king of that country, whom they afterwards murdered in cool blood; and committing the moſt barbarous ravages on the people, particularly on the monaſteries, they gave the Eaſt-Angles cauſe to regret the temporary relief which they had obtained, by aſſiſting the common enemy.

(871.) The next ſtation of the Danes was at Reading; whence they infeſted the neighbouring country by their incurſions. The Mercians, deſirous of ſhaking off their dependence on Ethered, refuſed to join him with their forces; and that prince, attended by Alfred, was obliged to march againſt the enemy, with the Weſt-Saxons alone, his hereditary ſubjects. The Danes, being defeated in an action, ſhut themſelves up in their garriſon; but quickly making thence an irruption, they routed the Weſt-Saxons, and obliged them to raiſe the ſiege. An action ſoon after enſued at Aſton in Berkſhire, where the Engliſh, in the beginning of the day, were in danger of a total defeat. Alfred advancing with one diviſion of the army, was ſurrounded by the enemy in diſadvantageous ground; and Ethered, who was at that time hearing maſs, refuſed to march to his aſſiſtance,

assistance, till prayers should be finished: But as he afterwards obtained the victory, this success, not the danger of Alfred, was ascribed by the monks to the piety of that monarch. This battle of Aston did not terminate the war: Another battle was a little after fought at Basing, where the Danes were more successful; and being reinforced by a new army from their own country, they became every day more terrible to the English. Amidst these confusions, Ethered died of a wound which he had received in an action with the Danes; and left the inheritance of his cares and misfortunes, rather than of his grandeur, to his brother Alfred, who was now twenty-two years of age.

ALFRED.

(871.) THIS prince gave very early marks of those great virtues and shining talents, by which, during the most difficult times, he saved his country from utter ruin and subversion. Ethelwolf his father, the year after his return with Alfred from Rome, had again sent the young prince thither with a numerous retinue; and a report being spread of the king's death, the pope, Leo III. gave Alfred the royal unction; whether prognosticating his future greatness from the appearances of his pregnant genius, or willing to pretend, even in that age, to the right of conferring kingdoms. Alfred, on his return home, became every day more the object of his father's affections; but being indulged in all youthful pleasures, he was much neglected in his education; and he had already reached his twelfth year, when he was yet totally ignorant of the lowest elements of literarure. His genius was first roused by the recital of Saxon poems, in which the queen took delight; and this species of erudition, which is sometimes able to make a considerable progress even among barbarians, expanded those noble and elevated sentiments which he had received from nature. Encouraged by the queen, and stimulated by his own ardent inclination, he soon learned to read those compositions; and proceeded thence to acquire

quire the knowledge of the Latin tongue, in which he met with authors that better prompted his heroic ſpirit, and directed his generous views. Abſorbed in theſe elegant purſuits, he regarded his acceſſion to royalty rather as an object of regret than of triumph; but being called to the throne, in preference to his brother's children, as well by the will of his father, a circumſtance which had great authority with the Anglo-Saxons, as by the vows of the whole nation, and the urgency of public affairs, he ſhook off his literary indolence, and exerted himſelf in the defence of his people. He had ſcarcely buried his brother, when he was obliged to take the field, in order to oppoſe the Danes, who had ſeized Wilton, and were exerciſing their uſual ravages on the countries around. He marched againſt them with the few troops which he could aſſemble on a ſudden; and giving them battle, gained at firſt an advantage, but by his purſuing the victory too far, the ſuperiority of the enemy's numbers prevailed, and recovered them the day. Their loſs, however, in the action was ſo conſiderable, that, fearing Alfred would receive daily reinforcement from his ſubjects, they were content to ſtipulate for a ſafe retreat, and promiſed to depart the kingdom. For that purpoſe they were conducted to London, and allowed to take up winter-quarters there; but, careleſs of their engagements, they immediately ſet themſelves to the committing of ſpoil on the neighbouring country. Burrhed king of Mercia, in whoſe territories London was ſituated, made a new ſtipulation with them, and engaged them, by preſents of money, to remove to Lindeſey in Lincolnſhire; a country which they had already reduced to ruin and deſolation. Finding therefore no object in that place, either for their rapine or violence, they ſuddenly turned back upon Mercia, in a quarter where they expected to find it without defence; and fixing their ſtation at Repton in Derbyſhire, they laid the whole country deſolate with fire and ſword. Burrhed, deſpairing of ſucceſs againſt an enemy, whom no force could reſiſt, and no treaties bind, abandoned his kingdom, and flying to Rome, took ſhelter in a cloiſter.

He

He was brother-in-law to Alfred, and the laſt who bore the title of King in Mercia.

The Weſt-Saxons were now the only remaining power in England; and though ſupported by the vigour and abilities of Alfred, they were unable to ſuſtain the efforts of thoſe ravagers, who from all quarters invaded them. A new ſwarm of Danes came over this year (875) under three princes, Guthrum, Oſcital, and Amund; and having firſt joined their countrymen at Repton, they ſoon found the neceſſity of ſeparating, in order to provide for their ſubſiſtence. Part of them, under the command of Haldene their chieftain, marched into Northumberland, where they fixed their quarters; part of them took quarters at Cambridge, whence they diſlodged in the enſuing ſummer, and ſeized Wereham, in the county of Dorſet, the very centre of Alfred's dominions. That prince ſo ſtraightened them in theſe quarters, that they were content to come to a treaty with him, and ſtipulated to depart his country. Alfred, well acquainted with their uſual perfidy, obliged them to ſwear upon the holy reliques to the obſervance of the treaty; not that he expected they would pay any veneration to the reliques; but he hoped that, if they now violated this oath, their impiety would infallibly draw down upon them the vengeance of Heaven. But the Danes, little apprehenſive of the danger, ſuddenly, without ſeeking any pretence, fell upon Alfred's army; and having put it to rout, marched weſtward and took poſſeſſion of Exeter. The prince collected new forces, and exerted ſuch vigour, that he fought in one year eight battles with the enemy, and reduced them to the utmoſt extremity. He hearkened however to new propoſals of peace; and was ſatisfied to ſtipulate with them, that they would ſettle ſomewhere in England, and would not permit the entrance of more ravagers into the kingdom. But while he was expecting the execution of this treaty, which it ſeemed the intereſt of the Danes themſelves to fulfil, he heard that another body had landed, and having collected all the ſcattered troops of their countrymen, had ſur-

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priſed Chippenham, then a conſiderable town, and were exerciſing their uſual ravages all around them.

This laſt incident quite broke the ſpirit of the Saxons, and reduced them to deſpair. Finding that, after all the miſerable havock which they had undergone in their perſons and in their property, after all the vigorous actions which they had exerted in their own defence, a new band, equally greedy of ſpoil and ſlaughter, had diſembarked among them; they believed themſelves abandoned by Heaven to deſtruction, and delivered over to thoſe ſwarms of robbers, which the fertile north thus inceſſantly poured forth againſt them. Some left their country and retired into Wales, or fled beyond ſea; others ſubmitted to the conquerors, in hopes of appeaſing their fury by a ſervile obedience. And every man's attention being now engroſſed in concern for his own preſervation, no one would hearken to the exhortations of the king, who ſummoned them to make under his conduct one effort more in defence of their prince, their country, and their liberties. Alfred himſelf was obliged to relinquiſh the enſigns of his dignity, to diſmiſs his ſervants, and to ſeek ſhelter, in the meaneſt diſguiſes, from the purſuit and fury of his enemies. He concealed himſelf under a peaſant's habit, and lived ſome time in the houſe of a neat-herd, who had been entruſted with the care of ſome of his cows. There paſſed here an incident, which has been recorded by all the hiſtorians, and was long preſerved by popular tradition, though it contains nothing memorable in itſelf, except ſo far as every circumſtance is intereſting, which attends ſo much virtue and dignity, reduced to ſuch diſtreſs. The wife of the neat-herd was ignorant of the condition of her royal gueſt; and obſerving him one day buſy by the fire-ſide, in trimming his bow and arrows, ſhe deſired him to take care of ſome cakes which were toaſting, while ſhe was employed elſewhere in other domeſtic affairs. But Alfred, whoſe thoughts were otherwiſe engaged, neglected this injunction; and the good woman, on her return, finding her cakes all burnt, rated the king

king very ſeverely, and upbraided him, that he always ſeemed very well pleaſed to eat her warm cakes, though he was thus negligent in toaſting them.

By degrees Alfred, as he found the ſearch of the enemy become more remiſs, collected ſome of his retainers, and retired into the centre of a bog, formed by the ſtagnating waters of the Thone and Parret in Somerſetſhire. He here found two acres of firm ground; and building a habitation on them, rendered himſelf ſecure by its fortifications, and ſtill more by the unknown and inacceſſible roads which led to it, and by the foreſts and moraſſes with which it was every way environed. This place he called Æthelingay, or the Iſle of Nobles; and it now bears the name of Athelney. He thence made frequent and unexpected ſallies upon the Danes, who often felt the vigour of his arm, but knew not from what quarter the blow came. He ſubſiſted himſelf and his followers by the plunder which he acquired; he procured them conſolation by revenge; and from ſmall ſucceſſes, he opened their minds to hope that, notwithſtanding his preſent low condition, more important victories might at length attend his valour.

Alfred lay here concealed, but not unactive, during a twelvemonth; when the news of a proſperous event reached his ears, and called him to the field. Hubba the Dane, having ſpread devaſtation, fire, and ſlaughter over Wales, had landed in Devonſhire from twenty-three veſſels, and laid ſiege to the caſtle of Kinwith, a place ſituated near the mouth of the ſmall river Tau. Oddune earl of Devonſhire, with his followers, had taken ſhelter there; and being ill ſupplied with proviſions, and even with water, he determined, by ſome vigorous blow, to prevent the neceſſity of ſubmiting to the barbarous enemy. He made a ſudden ſally on the Danes before ſunriſing; and taking them unprepared, he put them to rout, purſued them with great ſlaughter, killed Hubba himſelf, and got poſſeſſion of the famous *Reafen*, or enchanted ſtandard, in which the Danes put great confidence. It contained the figure of a raven, which had been inwoven by the three ſiſters of Hinguar and Hubba with many

magical incantations, and which, by its different movements, prognosticated, as the Danes believed, the good or bad success of any enterprise.

When Alfred observed this symptom of successful resistance in his subjects, he left his retreat; but before he would assemble them in arms, or urge them to any attempt, which, if unfortunate, might, in their present despondency, prove fatal, he resolved to inspect, himself, the situation of the enemy, and to judge of the probability of success. For this purpose he entered their camp under the disguise of a harper, and passed unsuspected through every quarter. He so entertained them with his music and facetious humours, that he met with a welcome reception; and was even introduced to the tent of Guthrum their prince, where he remained some days. He remarked the supine security of the Danes, their contempt of the English, their negligence in foraging and plundering, and their dissolute wasting of what they gained by rapine and violence. Encouraged by these favourable appearances, he secretly sent emissaries to the most considerable of his subjects, and summoned them to a rendezvous, attended by their warlike followers, at Brixton, on the borders of Selwood forest. The English, who had hoped to put an end to their calamities, by servile submission, now found the insolence and rapine of the conqueror more intolerable than all past fatigues and dangers; and, at the appointed day, they joyfully resorted to their prince. On his appearance, they received him with shouts of applause; and could not satiate their eyes with the sight of this beloved monarch, whom they had long regarded as dead, and who now, with voice and looks expressing his confidence of success, called them to liberty and to vengeance. He instantly conducted them to Eddington, where the Danes were encamped; and taking advantage of his previous knowledge of the place, he directed his attack against the most unguarded quarter of the enemy. The Danes, surprised to see an army of English, whom they considered as totally subdued, and still more astonished to hear that Alfred was at their head, made but a faint resistance,

ance, notwithſtanding their ſuperiority of number, and were ſoon put to flight with great ſlaughter. The remainder of the routed army, with their prince, was beſieged by Alfred in a fortified camp to which they fled; but being reduced to extremity by want and hunger, they had recourſe to the clemency of the victor, and offered to ſubmit on any conditions. The king, no leſs generous than brave, gave them their lives; and even formed a ſcheme for converting them, from mortal enemies, into faithful ſubjects and confederates. He knew that the kingdoms of Eaſt-Anglia and Northumberland were totally deſolated by the frequent inroads of the Danes, and he now propoſed to repeople them, by ſettling there Guthrum and his followers. He hoped that the new planters would at laſt betake themſelves to induſtry, when, by reaſon of his reſiſtance, and the exhauſted condition of the country, they could no longer ſubſiſt by plunder; and that they might ſerve him as a rampart againſt any future incurſions of their countrymen. But before he ratified theſe mild conditions with the Danes, he required that they ſhould give him one pledge of their ſubmiſſion, and of their inclination to incorporate with the Engliſh, by declaring their converſion to Chriſtianity. Guthrum, and his army, had no averſion to the propoſal; and, without much inſtruction, or argument, or conference, they were all admitted to baptiſm. The king anſwered for Guthrum at the font, gave him the name of Athelſtan, and received him as his adopted ſon.

(880.) The ſucceſs of this expedient ſeemed to correſpond to Alfred's hopes: The greater part of the Danes ſettled peaceably in their new quarters: Some ſmaller bodies of the ſame nation, which were diſperſed in Mercia, were diſtributed into the five cities, of Derby, Leiceſter, Stamford, Lincoln, and Nottingham, and were thence called the Fif or Five-burghers. The more turbulent and unquiet made an expedition into France under the command of Haſtings; and except by a ſhort incurſion of Danes, who ſailed up the Thames and landed at Fulham, but ſuddenly retreated to their ſhips on finding

finding the country in a poſture of defence, Alfred was not for ſome years infeſted by the inroads of thoſe barbarians.

The king employed this interval of tranquillity in reſtoring order to the ſtate, which had been ſhaken by ſo many violent convulſions; in eſtabliſhing civil and military inſtitutions; in compoſing the minds of men to induſtry and juſtice; and in providing againſt the return of like calamities. He was, more properly than his grandfather Egbert, the ſole monarch of the Engliſh (for ſo the Saxons were now univerſally called), becauſe the kingdom of Mercia was at laſt incorporated in his ſtate, and was governed by Ethelbert, his brother-in-law, who bore the title of Earl: And though the Danes, who peopled Eaſt-Anglia and Northumberland, were for ſome time ruled immediately by their own princes, they all acknowledged a ſubordination to Alfred, and ſubmitted to his ſuperior authority. As equality among ſubjects is the great ſource of concord, Alfred gave the ſame laws to the Danes and Engliſh, and put them entirely on a like footing in the adminiſtration both of civil and criminal juſtice. The fine for the murder of a Dane was the ſame with that for the murder of an Engliſhman; the great ſymbol of equality in thoſe ages.

The king, after rebuilding the ruined cities, particularly London, which had been deſtroyed by the Danes in the reign of Ethelwolf, eſtabliſhed a regular militia for the defence of the kingdom. He ordained that all his people ſhould be armed and regiſtered; he aſſigned them a regular rotation of duty; he diſtributed part into the caſtles and fortreſſes, which he built at proper places; he required another part to take the field on any alarm, and to aſſemble at ſtated places of rendezvous; and he left a ſufficient number at home, who were employed in the cultivation of the land, and who afterwards took their turn in military ſervice. The whole kingdom was like one great garriſon; and the Danes could no ſooner appear in one place, than a ſufficient number was aſſembled to oppoſe them, without leaving the other quarters defenceleſs or diſarmed.

But

But Alfred, ſenſible that the proper method of oppoſing an enemy, who made incurſions by ſea, was to meet them on their own element, took care to provide himſelf with a naval force, which, though the moſt natural defence of an iſland, had hitherto been totally neglected by the Engliſh. He increaſed the ſhipping of his kingdom both in number and ſtrength, and trained his ſubjects in the practice, as well of ſailing as of naval action. He diſtributed his armed veſſels in proper ſtations round the iſland, and was ſure to meet the Daniſh ſhips either before or after they had landed their troops, and to purſue them in all their incurſions. Though the Danes might ſuddenly, by ſurpriſe, diſembark on the coaſt, which was generally become deſolate by their frequent ravages, they were encountered by the Engliſh fleet in their retreat; and eſcaped not, as formerly, by abandoning their booty, but paid, by their total deſtruction, the penalty of the diſorders which they had committed.

In this manner Alfred repelled ſeveral inroads of theſe piratical Danes, and maintained his kingdom, during ſome years, in ſafety and tranquillity. A fleet of a hundred and twenty ſhips of war was ſtationed upon the coaſt; and being provided with warlike engines, as well as with expert ſeamen, both Friſians and Engliſh (for Alfred ſupplied the defects of his own ſubjects by engaging able foreigners in his ſervice), maintained a ſuperiority over thoſe ſmaller bands, with which England had ſo often been infeſted. But at laſt (893), Haſtings, the famous Daniſh chief, having ravaged all the provinces of France, both along the ſea-coaſt and the Loire and Seine, and being obliged to quit that country, more by the deſolation which he himſelf had occaſioned, than by the reſiſtance of the inhabitants, appeared off the coaſt of Kent with a fleet of three hundred and thirty ſail. The greater part of the enemy diſembarked in the Rother, and ſeized the fort of Apuldore. Haſtings himſelf, commanding a fleet of eighty ſail, entered the Thames, and fortifying Milton in Kent, began to ſpread his forces over the country, and to commit the moſt deſtructive ravages. But Alfred, on the firſt alarm

of

of this deſcent, flew to the defence of his people, at the head of a ſelect band of ſoldiers, whom he always kept about his perſon; and gathering to him the armed militia from all quarters, appeared in the field with a force ſuperior to the enemy. All ſtraggling parties, whom neceſſity, or love of plunder, had drawn to a diſtance from their chief encampment, were cut off by the Engliſh; and theſe pirates, inſtead of increaſing their ſpoil, found themſelves cooped up in their fortifications, and obliged to ſubſiſt by the plunder which they had brought from France. Tired of this ſituation, which muſt in the end prove ruinous to them, the Danes at Apuldore roſe ſuddenly from their encampment, with an intention of marching towards the Thames, and paſſing over into Eſſex: But they eſcaped not the vigilance of Alfred, who encountered them at Farnham, put them to rout, ſeized all their horſes and baggage, and chaſed the runaways on board their ſhips, which carried them up the Colne to Merſey in Eſſex, where they entrenched themſelves. Haſtings, at the ſame time, and probably by concert, made a like movement; and deſerting Milton, took poſſeſſion of Bamflete, near the Iſle of Canvey in the ſame county; where he haſtily threw up fortifications for his defence againſt the power of Alfred.

Unfortunately for the Engliſh, Guthrum, prince of the Eaſt-Anglian Danes, was now dead; as was alſo Guthred, whom the king had appointed governor of the Northumbrians; and thoſe reſtleſs tribes, being no longer reſtrained by the authority of their princes, and being encouraged by the appearance of ſo great a body of their countrymen, broke into rebellion, ſhook off the authority of Alfred, and yielding to their inveterate habits of war and depredation, embarked on board two hundred and forty veſſels, and appeared before Exeter in the weſt of England. Alfred loſt not a moment in oppoſing this new enemy. Having left ſome forces at London to make head againſt Haſtings and the other Danes, he marched ſuddenly to the weſt; and falling on the rebels before they were aware, purſued them to their ſhips with great ſlaughter. Theſe ravagers ſailing

next

next to Suſſex, began to plunder the country near Chicheſter; but the order which Alfred had every-where eſtabliſhed, ſufficed here, without his preſence, for the defence of the place; and the rebels meeting with a new repulſe, in which many of them were killed, and ſome of their ſhips taken, were obliged to put again to ſea, and were diſcouraged from attempting any other enterpriſe.

Meanwhile the Daniſh invaders in Eſſex, having united their force under the command of Haſtings, advanced into the inland country, and made ſpoil of all around them; but ſoon had reaſon to repent of their temerity. The Engliſh army left in London, aſſiſted by a body of the citizens, attacked the enemy's entrenchments at Bamflete, overpowered the garriſon, and having done great execution upon them, carried off the wife and two ſons of Haſtings. Alfred generouſly ſpared theſe captives; and even reſtored them to Haſtings, on condition that he ſhould depart the kingdom.

But though the king had thus honourably rid himſelf of this dangerous enemy, he had not entirely ſubdued or expelled the invaders. The piratical Danes willingly followed in an excurſion any proſperous leader who gave them hopes of booty; but were not ſo eaſily induced to relinquiſh their enterpriſe, or ſubmit to return, baffled and without plunder, into their native country. Great numbers of them, after the departure of Haſtings, ſeized and fortified Shobury at the mouth of the Thames; and having left a garriſon there, they marched along the river, till they came to Boddington in the county of Glouceſter; where, being reinforced by ſome Welſh, they threw up entrenchments, and prepared for their defence. The king here ſurrounded them with the whole force of his dominions; and as he had now a certain proſpect of victory, he reſolved to truſt nothing to chance, but rather to maſter his enemies by famine than aſſault. They were reduced to ſuch extremities that, having eaten their own horſes, and having many of them periſhed with hunger, they made a deſperate ſally upon the Engliſh; and though the greater number fell in the action, a conſiderable body made their eſcape.

Theſe

These roved about for some time in England, still pursued by the vigilance of Alfred; they attacked Leicester with success, defended themselves in Hartford, and then fled to Quatford, where they were finally broken and subdued. The small remains of them either dispersed themselves among their countrymen in Northumberland and East-Anglia, or had recourse again to the sea, where they exercised piracy, under the command of Sigefert, a Northumbrian. This freebooter, well acquainted with Alfred's naval preparations, had framed vessels of a new construction, higher and longer, and swifter than those of the English: But the king soon discovered his superior skill, by building vessels still higher and longer, and swifter than those of the Northumbrians; and falling upon them, while they were exercising their ravages in the west, he took twenty of their ships; and having tried all the prisoners at Winchester, he hanged them as pirates, the common enemies of mankind.

The well-timed severity of this execution, together with the excellent posture of defence established everywhere, restored full tranquillity in England, and provided for the future security of the government. The East-Anglian and Northumbrian Danes, on the first appearance of Alfred upon their frontiers, made anew the most humble submissions to him; and he thought it prudent to take them under his immediate government, without establishing over them a viceroy of their own nation. The Welsh also acknowledged his authority; and this great prince had now, by prudence and justice and valour, established his sovereignty over all the southern parts of the island, from the English channel to the frontiers of Scotland; when he died (901), in the vigour of his age and the full strength of his faculties, after a glorious reign of twenty-nine years and a half; in which he deservedly attained the appellation of Alfred the Great, and the title of Founder of the English monarchy.

The merit of this prince, both in private and public life, may with advantage be set in opposition to that of any

any monarch or citizen which the annals of any age or any nation can preſent to us. He ſeems indeed to be the model of that perfect character which, under the denomination of a ſage or wiſe man, philoſophers have been fond of delineating, rather as a fiction of their imagination, than in hopes of ever ſeeing it really exiſting: So happily were all his virtues tempered together; ſo juſtly were they blended; and ſo powerfully did each prevent the other from exceeding its proper boundaries! He knew how to reconcile the moſt enterpriſing ſpirit with the cooleſt moderation; the moſt obſtinate perſeverance with the eaſieſt flexibility; the moſt ſevere juſtice with the gentleſt lenity; the greateſt vigour in commanding with the moſt perfect affability of deportment; the higheſt capacity and inclination for ſcience, with the moſt ſhining talents for action. His civil and his military virtues are almoſt equally the objects of our admiration; excepting only, that the former, being more rare among princes, as well as more uſeful, ſeem chiefly to challenge our applauſe. Nature alſo, as if deſirous that ſo bright a production of her ſkill ſhould be ſet in the faireſt light, had beſtowed on him every bodily accompliſhment, vigour of limbs, dignity of ſhape and air, with a pleaſing, engaging, and open countenance. Fortune alone, by throwing him into that barbarous age, deprived him of hiſtorians worthy to tranſmit his fame to poſterity; and we wiſh to ſee him delineated in more lively colours, and with more particular ſtrokes, that we may at leaſt perceive ſome of thoſe ſmall ſpecks and blemiſhes, from which, as a man, it is impoſſible he could be entirely exempted.

But we ſhould give but an imperfect idea of Alfred's merit, were we to confine our narration to his military exploits, and were not more particular in our account of his inſtitutions for the execution of juſtice, and of his zeal for the encouragement of arts and ſciences.

After Alfred had ſubdued, and had ſettled or expelled the Danes, he found the kingdom in the moſt wretched condition; deſolated by the ravages of thoſe barbarians, and thrown into diſorders, which were calculated to

perpetuate its misery. Though the great armies of the Danes were broken, the country was full of straggling troops of that nation, who, being accustomed to live by plunder, were become incapable of industry; and who, from the natural ferocity of their manners, indulged themselves in committing violence, even beyond what was requisite to supply their necessities. The English themselves, reduced to the most extreme indigence by these continued depredations, had shaken off all bands of government; and those who had been plundered today, betook themselves next day to the like disorderly life, and, from despair, joined the robbers in pillaging and ruining their fellow-citizens. These were the evils for which it was necessary that the vigilance and activity of Alfred should provide a remedy.

That he might render the execution of justice strict and regular, he divided all England into counties; these counties he subdivided into hundreds; and the hundreds into tithings. Every householder was answerable for the behaviour of his family and slaves, and even of his guests, if they lived above three days in his house. Ten neighbouring householders were formed into one corporation, who, under the name of a tithing, decennary, or fribourg, were answerable for each other's conduct, and over whom one person, called a tithingman, headbourg, or borsholder, was appointed to preside. Every man was punished as an outlaw, who did not register himself in some tithing. And no man could change his habitation, without a warrant or certificate from the borsholder of the tithing to which he formerly belonged.

When any person in any tithing or decennary was guilty of a crime, the borsholder was summoned to answer for him; and if he were not willing to be surety for his appearance, and his clearing himself, the criminal was committed to prison, and there detained till his trial. If he fled, either before or after finding sureties, the borsholder and decennary became liable to inquiry, and were exposed to the penalties of law. Thirty-one days were allowed them for producing the criminal; and

and if that time elapſed without their being able to find him, the borſholder, with two other members of the decennary, was obliged to appear, and, together with three chief members of the three neighbouring decennaries (making twelve in all), to ſwear that his decennary was free from all privity both of the crime committed, and of the eſcape of the criminal. If the borſholder could not find ſuch a number to anſwer for their innocence, the decennary was compelled by fine to make ſatisfaction to the king, according to the degree of the offence. By this inſtitution every man was obliged from his own intereſt to keep a watchful eye over the conduct of his neighbours; and was in a manner ſurety for the behaviour of thoſe who were placed under the diviſion to which he belonged: Whence theſe decennaries received the name of frank-pledges.

Such a regular diſtribution of the people, with ſuch a ſtrict confinement in their habitation, may not be neceſſary in times when men are more enured to obedience and juſtice; and it might perhaps be regarded as deſtructive of liberty and commerce in a poliſhed ſtate; but it was well calculated to reduce that fierce and licentious people under the ſalutary reſtraint of law and government. But Alfred took care to temper theſe rigours by other inſtitutions favourable to the freedom of the citizens; and nothing could be more popular and liberal than his plan for the adminiſtration of juſtice. The borſholder ſummoned together his whole decennary to aſſiſt him in deciding any leſſer difference which occurred among the members of this ſmall community. In affairs of greater moment, in appeals from the decennary, or in controverſies ariſing between members of different decennaries, the cauſe was brought before the hundred, which conſiſted of ten decennaries, or a hundred families of freemen, and which was regularly aſſembled once in four weeks, for the deciding of cauſes. Their method of deciſion deſerves to be noted, as being the origin of juries; an inſtitution, admirable in itſelf, and the beſt calculated for the preſervation of liberty and the adminiſtration of juſtice, that ever was deviſed by

the wit of man. Twelve freeholders were choſen, who, having ſworn, together with the hundreder, or preſiding magiſtrate of that diviſion, to adminiſter impartial juſtice, proceeded to the examination of that cauſe which was ſubmitted to their juriſdiction. And beſide theſe monthly meetings of the hundred, there was an annual meeting, appointed for a more general inſpection of the police of the diſtrict; for the inquiry into crimes, the correction of abuſes in magiſtrates, and the obliging of every perſon to ſhew the decennary in which he was regiſtered. The people, in imitation of their anceſtors, the ancient Germans, aſſembled there in arms; whence a hundred was ſometimes called a wapentake, and its court ſerved both for the ſupport of military diſcipline, and for the adminiſtration of civil juſtice.

The next ſuperior court to that of the hundred was the county-court, which met twice a year, after Michaelmas and Eaſter, and conſiſted of the freeholders of the county, who poſſeſſed an equal vote in the deciſion of cauſes. The biſhop preſided in this court, together with the alderman; and the proper object of the court was the receiving of appeals from the hundreds and decennaries, and the deciding of ſuch controverſies as aroſe between men of different hundreds. Formerly, the alderman poſſeſſed both the civil and military authority; but Alfred, ſenſible that this conjunction of powers rendered the nobility dangerous and independent, appointed alſo a ſheriff in each county, who enjoyed a co-ordinate authority with the former in the judicial function. His office alſo impowered him to guard the rights of the crown in the county, and to levy the fines impoſed; which in that age formed no contemptible part of the public revenue.

There lay an appeal, in default of juſtice, from all theſe courts to the king himſelf in council; and as the people, ſenſible of the equity and great talents of Alfred, placed their chief confidence in him, he was ſoon overwhelmed with appeals from all parts of England. He was indefatigable in the diſpatch of theſe cauſes; but finding that his time muſt be entirely engroſſed by this branch

branch of duty, he reſolved to obviate the inconvenience, by correcting the ignorance or corruption of the inferior magiſtrates, from which it aroſe. He took care to have his nobility inſtructed in letters and the laws: He choſe the earls and ſheriffs from among the men moſt celebrated for probity and knowledge: He puniſhed ſeverely all malverſation in office: And he removed all the earls, whom he found unequal to the truſt; allowing only ſome of the more elderly to ſerve by a deputy, till their death ſhould make room for more worthy ſucceſſors.

The better to guide the magiſtrates in the adminiſtration of juſtice, Alfred framed a body of laws; which, though now loſt, ſerved long as the baſis of Engliſh juriſprudence, and is generally deemed the origin of what is denominated the COMMON LAW. He appointed regular meetings of the ſtates of England twice a year in London; a city which he himſelf had repaired and beautified, and which he thus rendered the capital of the kingdom. The ſimilarity of theſe inſtitutions to the cuſtoms of the ancient Germans, to the practice of the other northern conquerors, and to the Saxon laws during the Heptarchy, prevents us from regarding Alfred as the ſole author of this plan of government; and leads us rather to think, that, like a wiſe man, he contented himſelf with reforming, extending, and executing the inſtitutions which he found previouſly eſtabliſhed. But, on the whole, ſuch ſucceſs attended his legiſlation, that every thing bore ſuddenly a new face in England: Robberies and iniquities of all kinds were repreſſed by the puniſhment or reformation of the criminals: And ſo exact was the general police, that Alfred, it is ſaid, hung up, by way of bravado, golden bracelets near the highways; and no man dared to touch them. Yet, amidſt theſe rigours of juſtice, this great prince preſerved the moſt ſacred regard to the liberty of his people; and it is a memorable ſentiment preſerved in his will, that it was juſt the Engliſh ſhould for ever remain as free as their own thoughts.

As good morals and knowledge are almoſt inſeparable, in every age, though not in every individual; the care

of Alfred for the encouragement of learning among his ſubjects, was another uſeful branch of his legiſlation, and tended to reclaim the Engliſh from their former diſſolute and ferocious manners: But the king was guided in this purſuit, leſs by political views, than by his natural bent and propenſity towards letters. When he came to the throne, he found the nation ſunk into the groſſeſt ignorance and barbariſm, proceeding from the continued diſorders in the government, and from the ravages of the Danes: The monaſteries were deſtroyed, the monks butchered or diſperſed, their libraries burnt; and thus the only ſeats of erudition in thoſe ages were totally ſubverted. Alfred himſelf complains, that on his acceſſion he knew not one perſon, ſouth of the Thames, who could ſo much as interpret the Latin ſervice; and very few in the northern parts, who had even reached that pitch of erudition. But this prince invited over the moſt celebrated ſcholars from all parts of Europe; he eſtabliſhed ſchools every-where for the inſtruction of his people; he founded, at leaſt repaired, the univerſity of Oxford, and endowed it with many privileges, revenues, and immunities; he enjoined by law all freeholderes poſſeſſed of two hydes * of land or more, to ſend their children to ſchool for their inſtruction; he gave preferment both in church and ſtate to ſuch only as had made ſome proficiency in knowledge: And by all theſe expedients he had the ſatisfaction, before his death, to ſee a great change in the face of affairs; and in a work of his, which is ſtill extant, he congratulates himſelf on the progreſs which learning, under his patronage, had already made in England.

But the moſt effectual expedient, employed by Alfred, for the encouragement of learning, was his own example, and the conſtant aſſiduity with which, notwithſtanding the multiplicity and urgency of his affairs, he

* A hyde contained land ſufficient to employ one plough. See H. Hunt. lib. 6. in A. D. 1008. Annal. Waverl. in A. D. 1083. Gervaſe of Tilbury ſays, it commonly contained about 100 acres.

employed

employed himſelf in the purſuits of knowledge. He uſually divided his time into three equal portions: One was employed in ſleep, and the refection of his body by diet and exerciſe; another in the diſpatch of buſineſs; a third in ſtudy and devotion; and that he might more exactly meaſure the hours, he made uſe of burning tapers of equal length, which he fixed in lanthorns; an expedient ſuited to that rude age, when the geometry of dialling, and the mechaniſm of clocks and watches, were totally unknown. And by ſuch a regular diſtribution of his time, though he often laboured under great bodily infirmities, this martial hero, who fought in perſon fifty-ſix battles by ſea and land, was able, during a life of no extraordinary length, to acquire more knowledge, and even to compoſe more books, than moſt ſtudious men, though bleſt with the greateſt leiſure and application, have, in more fortunate ages, made the object of their uninterrupted induſtry.

Senſible that the people at all times, eſpecially when their underſtandings are obſtructed by ignorance and bad education, are not much ſuſceptible of ſpeculative inſtruction, Alfred endeavoured to convey his morality by apologues, parables, ſtories, apophthegms, couched in poetry; and beſides propagating among his ſubjects, former compoſitions of that kind, which he found in the Saxon tongue, he exerciſed his genius in inventing works of a like nature, as well as in tranſlating from the Greek the elegant fables of Æſop. He alſo gave Saxon tranſlations of Oroſius's and Bede's hiſtories; and of Boethius concerning the conſolation of philoſophy. And he deemed it nowiſe derogatory from his other great characters of ſovereign, legiſlator, warrior, and politician, thus to lead the way to his people in the purſuits of literature.

Meanwhile, this prince was not negligent in encouraging the vulgar and mechanical arts, which have a more ſenſible, though not a cloſer connection with the intereſts of ſociety. He invited, from all quarters, induſtrious foreigners to repeople his country, which had been deſolated by the ravages of the Danes. He introduced

troduced and encouraged manufactures of all kinds; and no inventor or improver of any ingenious art did he suffer to go unrewarded. He prompted men of activity to betake themselves to navigation, to push commerce into the most remote countries, and to acquire riches by propagating industry among their fellow-citizens. He set apart a seventh portion of his own revenue for maintaining a number of workmen, whom he constantly employed in rebuilding the ruined cities, castles, palaces, and monasteries. Even the elegancies of life were brought to him from the Mediterranean and the Indies; and his subjects, by seeing those productions of the peaceful arts, were taught to respect the virtues of justice and industry, from which alone they could arise. Both living and dead, Alfred was regarded by foreigners, no less than by his own subjects, as the greatest prince after Charlemagne, that had appeared in Europe during several ages, and as one of the wisest and best that had ever adorned the annals of any nation.

Alfred had, by his wife Ethelswitha, daughter of a Mercian earl, three sons and three daughters. The eldest son, Edmund, died without issue, in his father's lifetime. The third, Ethelward, inherited his father's passion for letters, and lived a private life. The second, Edward, succeeded to his power, and passes by the appellation of Edward the Elder, being the first of that name who sat on the English throne.

EDWARD THE ELDER.

(901.) THIS prince, who equalled his father in military talents, though inferior to him in knowledge and erudition, found, immediately on his accession, a specimen of that turbulent life to which all princes, and even all individuals, were exposed, in an age, when men less restrained by law or justice, and less occupied by industry, had no aliment for their inquietude, but wars, insurrections, convulsions, rapine, and depredation. Ethelwald his cousin-german, son of king Ethelbert, the elder brother of Alfred, insisted on his preferable title;

title; and arming his partiſans, took poſſeſſion of Winburne, where he ſeemed determined to defend himſelf to the laſt extremity, and to wait the iſſue of his pretenſions. But when the king approached the town with a great army, Ethelwald, having the proſpect of certain deſtruction, made his eſcape, and fled firſt into Normandy, thence into Northumberland, where he hoped that the people, who had been recently ſubdued by Alfred, and who were impatient of peace, would, on the intelligence of that great prince's death, ſeize the firſt pretence or opportunity of rebellion. The event did not diſappoint his expectations: The Northumbrians declared for him; and Ethelwald, having thus connected his intereſts with the Daniſh tribes, went beyond ſea, and collecting a body of theſe freebooters, he excited the hopes of all thoſe who had been accuſtomed to ſubſiſt by rapine and violence. The Eaſt-Anglian Danes joined his party: The Five-burgers, who were ſeated in the heart of Mercia, began to put themſelves in motion; and the Engliſh found that they were again menaced with thoſe convulſions, from which the valour and policy of Alfred had ſo lately reſcued them. The rebels, headed by Ethelwald, made an incurſion into the counties of Glouceſter, Oxford, and Wilts; and having exerciſed their ravages in theſe places, they retired with their booty before the king, who had aſſembled an army, was able to approach them. Edward however, who was determined that his preparations ſhould not be fruitleſs, conducted his forces into Eaſt-Anglia, and retaliated the injuries which the inhabitants had committed, by ſpreading the like devaſtation among them. Satiated with revenge, and loaded with booty, he gave orders to retire: But the authority of thoſe ancient kings, which was feeble in peace, was not much better eſtabliſhed in the field; and the Kentiſh men, greedy of more ſpoil, ventured, contrary to repeated orders, to ſtay behind him, and to take up their quarters in Bury. This diſobedience proved in the iſſue fortunate to Edward. The Danes aſſaulted the Kentiſh men, but met with ſo vigorous a reſiſtance, that, though they gained the field of battle, they

they bought that advantage by the loſs of their braveſt leaders, and among the reſt, by that of Ethelwaid, who periſhed in the action. The king, freed from the fear of ſo dangerous a competitor, made peace on advantageous terms with the Eaſt-Angles.

In order to reſtore England to ſuch a ſtate of tranquillity as it was then capable of attaining, nought was wanting but the ſubjection of the Northumbrians, who, aſſiſted by the ſcattered Danes in Mercia, continually infeſted the bowels of the kingdom. Edward, in order to divert the force of theſe enemies, prepared a fleet to attack them by ſea; hoping that, when his ſhips appeared on their coaſt, they muſt at leaſt remain at home, and provide for their defence. But the Northumbrians were leſs anxious to ſecure their own property, than greedy to commit ſpoil on their enemy; and concluding, that the chief ſtrength of the Engliſh was embarked on board the fleet, they thought the opportunity favourable, and entered Edward's territories with all their forces. The king, who was prepared againſt this event, attacked them on their return at Tetenhall in the county of Stafford, put them to rout, recovered all the booty, and purſued them with great ſlaughter into their own country.

All the reſt of Edward's reign was a ſcene of continued and ſucceſsful action againſt the Northumbrians, the Eaſt-Angles, the Five-burgers, and the foreign Danes, who invaded him from Normandy and Britanny. Nor was he leſs provident in putting his kingdom in a poſture of defence, than vigorous in aſſaulting the enemy. He fortified the towns of Cheſter, Eddeſbury, Warwic, Cherbury, Buckingham, Towceſter, Maldon, Huntingdon, and Colcheſter. He fought two ſignal battles at Temsford and Maldon. He vanquiſhed Thurketill, a great Daniſh chief, and obliged him to retire with his followers into France, in queſt of ſpoil and adventures. He ſubdued the Eaſt-Angles, and forced them to ſwear allegiance to him: He expelled the two rival princes of Northumberland, Reginald and Sidroc, and acquired, for the preſent, the dominions of that province:

vince: Several tribes of the Britons were ſubjected by him; and even the Scots, who, during the reign of Egbert, had, under the conduct of Kenneth their king, increaſed their power by the final ſubjection of the Picts, were nevertheleſs obliged to give him marks of ſubmiſſion. In all theſe fortunate atchievments he was aſſiſted by the activity and prudence of his ſiſter Ethelfleda, who was widow of Ethelbert earl of Mercia, and who, after her huſband's death, retained the government of that province. This princeſs, who had been reduced to extremity in child-bed, refuſed afterwards all commerce with her huſband; not from any weak ſuperſtition, as was common in that age, but becauſe ſhe deemed all domeſtic occupations unworthy of her maſculine and ambitious ſpirit. She died before her brother; and Edward, during the remainder of his reign, took upon himſelf the immediate government of Mercia, which before had been entruſted to the authority of a governor. The Saxon Chronicle fixes the death of this prince in 925: His kingdom devolved to Athelſtan his natural ſon.

ATHELSTAN.

(925.) THE ſtain in this prince's birth was not, in thoſe times, deemed ſo conſiderable as to exclude him from the throne; and Athelſtan, being of an age, as well as of a capacity, fitted for government, obtained the preference to Edward's younger children, who, though legitimate, were of too tender years to rule a nation ſo much expoſed both to foreign invaſion and to domeſtic convulſions. Some diſcontents, however, prevailed on his acceſſion; and Alfred, a nobleman of conſiderable power, was thence encouraged to enter into a conſpiracy againſt him. This incident is related by hiſtorians with circumſtances which the reader, according to the degree of credit he is diſpoſed to give them, may impute either to the invention of monks, who forged them, or to their artifice, who found means of making them real. Alfred, it is ſaid, being ſeized upon ſtrong ſuſpicions, but without any certain proof, firmly denied

denied the conſpiracy imputed to him; and in order to juſtify himſelf, he offered to ſwear to his innocence before the pope, whoſe perſon, it was ſuppoſed, contained ſuch ſuperior ſanctity, that no one could preſume to give a falſe oath in his preſence, and yet hope to eſcape the immediate vengeance of Heaven. The king accepted of the condition, and Alfred was conducted to Rome; where, either conſcious of his innocence, or neglecting the ſuperſtition to which he appealed, he ventured to make the oath required of him, before John, who then filled the papal chair. But no ſooner had he pronounced the fatal words, than he fell into convulſions, of which, three days after, he expired. The king, as if the guilt of the conſpirator were now fully aſcertained, confiſcated his eſtate, and made a preſent of it to the monaſtery of Malmſbury; ſecure that no doubts would ever thenceforth be entertained concerning the juſtice of his proceedings.

The dominion of Athelſtan was no ſooner eſtabliſhed over his Engliſh ſubjects, than he endeavoured to give ſecurity to the government, by providing againſt the inſurrections of the Danes, which had created ſo much diſturbance to his predeceſſors. He marched into Northumberland; and finding that the inhabitants bore with patience the Engliſh yoke, he thought it prudent to confer on Sithric, a Daniſh nobleman, the title of king, and to attach him to his intereſts, by giving him his ſiſter Editha in marriage. But this policy proved by accident the ſource of dangerous conſequences. Sithric died in a twelvemonth after; and his two ſons by a former marriage, Anlaf and Godfrid, founding pretenſions on their father's elevation, aſſumed the ſovereignty, without waiting for Athelſtan's conſent. They were ſoon expelled by the power of that monarch; and the former took ſhelter in Ireland, as the latter did in Scotland; where he received, during ſome time, protection from Conſtantine, who then enjoyed the crown of that kingdom. The Scottiſh prince however, continually ſolicited, and even menaced by Athelſtan, at laſt promiſed to deliver up his gueſt; but ſecretly deteſting

this treachery, he gave Godfrid warning to make his escape; and that fugitive, after subsisting by piracy for some years, freed the king, by his death, from any farther anxiety. Athelstan, resenting Constantine's behaviour, entered Scotland with an army; and ravaging the country with impunity, he reduced the Scots to such distress, that their king was content to preserve his crown, by making submissions to the enemy. The English historians assert, that Constantine did homage to Athelstan for his kingdom; and they add, that the latter prince, being urged by his courtiers to push the present favourable opportunity, and entirely subdue Scotland, replied, That it was more glorious to confer than conquer kingdoms. But those annals, so uncertain and imperfect in themselves, lose all credit, when national prepossessions and animosities have place: And on that account, the Scotch historians, who, without having any more knowledge of the matter, strenuously deny the fact, seem more worthy of belief.

Constantine, whether he owed the retaining of his crown to the moderation of Athelstan, who was unwilling to employ all his advantages against him, or to the policy of that prince, who esteemed the humiliation of an enemy a greater acquisition than the subjection of a discontented and mutinous people, thought the behaviour of the English monarch more an object of resentment than of gratitude. He entered into a confederacy with Anlaf, who had collected a great body of Danish pirates, whom he found hovering in the Irish seas; and with some Welsh princes, who were terrified at the growing power of Athelstan: And all these allies made by concert an irruption with a great army into England. Athelstan, collecting his forces, met the enemy near Brunsbury in Northumberland, and defeated them in a general engagement. This victory was chiefly ascribed to the valour of Turketul, the English chancellor: For in those turbulent ages, no one was so much occupied in civil employments, as wholly to lay aside the military character *.

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* The office of chancellor among the Anglo-Saxons re-

There is a circumſtance, not unworthy of notice, which hiſtorians relate with regard to the tranſactions of this war. Anlaf, on the approach of the Engliſh army, thought that he could not venture too much to enſure a fortunate event; and employing the artifice formerly practiſed by Alfred againſt the Danes, he entered the enemy's camp in the habit of a minſtrel. The ſtratagem was for the preſent attended with like ſucceſs. He gave ſuch ſatisfaction to the ſoldiers, who flocked about him, that they introduced him to the king's tent; and Anlaf, having played before that prince and his nobles during their repaſt, was diſmiſſed with a handſome reward. His prudence kept him from refuſing the preſent; but his pride determined him, on his departure, to bury it, while he fancied that he was uneſpied by all the world. But a ſoldier in Athelſtan's camp, who had formerly ſerved under Anlaf, had been ſtruck with ſome ſuſpicion on the firſt appearance of the minſtrel; and was engaged by curioſity to obſerve all his motions. He regarded this laſt action as a full proof of Anlaf's diſguiſe; and he immediately carried the intelligence to Athelſtan, who blamed him for not ſooner giving him information, that he might have ſeized his enemy. But the ſoldier told him, that, as he had formerly ſworn fealty to Anlaf, he could never have pardoned himſelf the treachery of betraying and ruining his ancient maſter; and that Athelſtan himſelf, after ſuch an inſtance of his criminal conduct, would have had equal reaſon to diſtruſt his allegiance. Athelſtan, having praiſed the generoſity of the ſoldier's principles, reflected on the incident, which he foreſaw might be attended with important conſequences. He removed his ſtation in the camp; and as a biſhop arrived that evening with a reinforcement of troops (for the eccleſiaſtics were then no leſs warlike than the civil magiſtrates), he occupied with his train that very place which had been left vacant by the king's removal. The precaution

ſembled more that of a ſecretary of ſtate, than that of our preſent chancellor.

of

of Athelſtan was found prudent: For no ſooner had darkneſs fallen, than Anlaf broke into the camp, and haſtening directly to the place where he had left the king's tent, put the biſhop to death, before he had time to prepare for his defence.

There fell ſeveral Daniſh and Welſh princes in the action of Brunſbury; and Conſtantine and Anlaf made their eſcape with difficulty, leaving the greater part of their army on the field of battle. After this ſucceſs, Athelſtan enjoyed his crown in tranquillity; and he is regarded as one of the ableſt and moſt active of thoſe ancient princes. He paſſed a remarkable law, which was calculated for the encouragement of commerce, and which it required ſome liberality of mind in that age to have deviſed: That a merchant, who had made three long ſea-voyages on his own account, ſhould be admitted to the rank of a thane or gentleman. This prince died at Gloceſter in the year 941, after a reign of ſixteen years; and was ſucceeded by Edmund, his legitimate brother.

EDMUND.

(941.) EDMUND, on his acceſſion, met with diſturbance from the reſtleſs Northumbrians, who lay in wait for every opportunity of breaking into rebellion. But marching ſuddenly with his forces into their country, he ſo overawed the rebels, that they endeavoured to appeaſe him by the moſt humble ſubmiſſions. In order to give him the ſurer pledge of their obedience, they offered to embrace Chriſtianity; a religion which the Engliſh Danes had frequently profeſſed, when reduced to difficulties, but which, for that very reaſon, they regarded as a badge of ſervitude, and ſhook off as ſoon as a favourable opportunity offered. Edmund, truſting little to their ſincerity, in this forced ſubmiſſion, uſed the precaution of removing the Five-burgers from the towns of Mercia, in which they had been allowed to ſettle; becauſe it was always found, that they took advantage of every commotion, and introduced the rebellious or foreign Danes into the heart of the kingdom.

He alſo conquered Cumberland from the Britons; and conferred that territory on Malcolm king of Scotland, on condition that he ſhould do him homage for it, and protect the north from all future incurſions of the Danes.

Edmund was young when he came to the crown; yet was his reign ſhort, as his death was violent. One day as he was ſolemnizing a feſtival in the county of Gloceſter, he remarked that Leolf, a notorious robber, whom he had ſentenced to baniſhment, had yet the boldneſs to enter the hall where he himſelf dined, and to ſit at table with his attendants. Enraged at this inſolence, he ordered him to leave the room; but on his refuſing to obey the king, whoſe temper, naturally choleric, was inflamed by this additional inſult, leaped on him himſelf, and ſeized him by the hair: But the ruffian, puſhed to extremity, drew his dagger, and gave Edmund a wound, of which he immediately expired. This event happened in the year 946, and in the ſixth year of the king's reign. Edmund left male-iſſue, but ſo young, that they were incapable of governing the kingdom; and his brother, Edred, was promoted to the throne.

EDRED.

(946.) THE reign of this prince, as thoſe of his predeceſſors, was diſturbed by the rebellions and incurſions of the Northumbrian Danes, who, though frequently quelled, were never entirely ſubdued, nor had ever paid a ſincere allegiance to the crown of England. The acceſſion of a new king ſeemed to them a favourable opportunity for ſhaking off the yoke; but on Edred's appearance with an army, they made him their wonted ſubmiſſions; and the king, having waſted the country with fire and ſword, as a puniſhment of their rebellion, obliged them to renew their oaths of allegiance; and he ſtraight retired with his forces. The obedience of the Danes laſted no longer than the preſent terror. Provoked at the devaſtations of Edred, and even reduced by neceſſity to ſubſiſt on plunder, they broke into a new rebellion,

bellion, and were again ſubdued: But the king, now inſtructed by experience, took greater precautions againſt their future revolt. He fixed Engliſh garriſons in their moſt conſiderable towns; and placed over them an Engliſh governor, who might watch all their motions, and ſuppreſs any inſurrection on its firſt appearance. He obliged alſo Malcolm king of Scotland, to renew his homage for the lands which he held in England.

Edred, though not unwarlike, nor unfit for active life, lay under the influence of the loweſt ſuperſtition, and had blindly delivered over his conſcience to the guidance of Dunſtan, commonly called St. Dunſtan, abbot of Glaſtenbury, whom he advanced to the higheſt offices, and who covered, under the appearance of ſanctity, the moſt violent and moſt inſolent ambition. Taking advantage of the implicit confidence repoſed in him by the king, this churchman imported into England a new order of monks, who much changed the ſtate of eccleſiaſtical affairs, and excited, on their firſt eſtabliſhment, the moſt violent commotions.

From the introduction of Chriſtianity among the Saxons, there had been monaſteries in England; and theſe eſtabliſhments had extremely multiplied, by the donations of the princes and nobles; whoſe ſuperſtition, derived from their ignorance and precarious life, and increaſed by remorſes for the crimes into which they were ſo frequently betrayed, knew no other expedient for appeaſing the Deity than a profuſe liberality towards the eccleſiaſtics. But the monks had hitherto been a ſpecies of ſecular prieſts, who lived after the manner of the preſent canons or prebendaries, and were both intermingled, in ſome degree, with the world, and endeavoured to render themſelves uſeful to it. They were employed in the education of youth: They had the diſpoſal of their own time and induſtry: They were not ſubjected to the rigid rules of an order: They had made no vows of implicit obedience to their ſuperiors: And they ſtill retained the choice, without quitting the convent, either of a married or a ſingle life. But a miſtaken piety had produced in Italy a new ſpecies of monks,

called Benedictines; who, carrying farther the plausible principles of mortification, secluded themselves entirely from the world, renounced all claim to liberty, and made a merit of the most inviolable chastity. These practices and principles, which superstition at first engendered, were greedily embraced and promoted by the policy of the court of Rome. The Roman pontiff, who was making every day great advances towards an absolute sovereignty over the ecclesiastics, perceived that the celibacy of the clergy alone could break off entirely their connection with the civil power, and depriving them of every other object of ambition, engage them to promote, with unceasing industry, the grandeur of their own order. He was sensible that, so long as the monks were indulged in marriage, and were permitted to rear families, they never could be subjected to strict discipline, or reduced to that slavery under their superiors, which was requisite to procure to the mandates, issued from Rome, a ready and zealous obedience. Celibacy, therefore, began to be extolled, as the indispensable duty of priests; and the pope undertook to make all the clergy throughout the western world renounce at once the privilege of marriage: A fortunate policy; but at the same time an undertaking the most difficult of any, since he had the strongest propensities of human nature to encounter, and found, that the same connections with the female sex, which generally encourage devotion, were here unfavourable to the success of his project. It is no wonder, therefore, that this master-stroke of art should have met with violent contradiction, and that the interests of the hierarchy, and the inclinations of the priests, being now placed in this singular opposition, should, notwithstanding the continued efforts of Rome, have retarded the execution of that bold scheme during the course of near three centuries.

As the bishops and parochial clergy lived apart with their families, and were more connected with the world, the hopes of success with them were fainter, and the pretence for making them renounce marriage was much less plausible. But the pope, having cast his eye on the

the monks as the baſis of his authority, was determined to reduce them under ſtrict rules of obedience, to procure them the credit of ſanctity by an appearance of the moſt rigid mortification, and to break off all their other ties which might interfere with his ſpiritual policy. Under pretence, therefore, of reforming abuſes, which were, in ſome degree, unavoidable in the ancient eſtabliſhments, he had already ſpread over the ſouthern countries of Europe the ſevere laws of the monaſtic life, and began to form attempts towards a like innovation in England. The favourable opportunity offered itſelf (and it was greedily ſeized), ariſing from the weak ſuperſtition of Edred, and the violent impetuous character of Dunſtan.

Dunſtan was born of noble parents in the weſt of England; and being educated under his uncle Aldhelm, then archbiſhop of Canterbury, had betaken himſelf to the eccleſiaſtical life, and had acquired ſome character in the court of Edmund. He was, however, repreſented to that prince as a man of licentious manners; and finding his fortune blaſted by theſe ſuſpicions, his ardent ambition prompted him to repair his indiſcretions, by running into an oppoſite extreme. He ſecluded himſelf entirely from the world; he framed a cell ſo ſmall, that he could neither ſtand erect in it, nor ſtretch out his limbs during his repoſe; and he here employed himſelf perpetually either in devotion or in manual labour. It is probable, that his brain became gradually crazed by theſe ſolitary occupations, and that his head was filled with chimeras, which, being believed by himſelf and his ſtupid votaries, procured him the general character of ſanctity among the people. He fancied that the devil, among the frequent viſits which he paid him, was one day more earneſt than uſual in his temptations; till Dunſtan, provoked at his importunity, ſeized him by the noſe with a pair of red-hot pincers, as he put his head into the cell; and he held him there, till that malignant ſpirit made the whole neighbourhood reſound with his bellowings. This notable exploit was ſeriouſly credited and extolled by the public; it is tranſmitted to poſterity by one who, conſidering the age in which he lived, may

paſs

paſs for a writer of ſome elegance *; and it inſured to Dunſtan a reputation which no real piety, much leſs virtue, could, even in the moſt enlightened period, have ever procured him with the people.

Supported by the character obtained in his retreat, Dunſtan appeared again in the world; and gained ſuch an aſcendant over Edred, who had ſucceeded to the crown, as made him, not only the director of that prince's conſcience, but his counſellor in the moſt momentous affairs of government. He was placed at the head of the treaſury, and being thus poſſeſſed both of power at court, and of credit with the populace, he was enabled to attempt with ſucceſs the moſt arduous enterpriſes. Finding that his advancement had been owing to the opinion of his auſterity, he profeſſed himſelf a partiſan of the rigid monaſtic rules; and after introducing that reformation into the convents of Glaſtenbury and Abingdon, he endeavoured to render it univerſal in the kingdom.

The minds of men were already well prepared for this innovation. The praiſes of an inviolable chaſtity had been carried to the higheſt extravagance by ſome of the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity among the Saxons: The pleaſures of love had been repreſented as incompatible with Chriſtian perfection: And a total abſtinence from all commerce with the ſex was deemed ſuch a meritorious penance, as was ſufficient to atone for the greateſt enormities. The conſequence ſeemed natural, that thoſe, at leaſt, who officiated at the altar ſhould be clear of this pollution; and when the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, which was now creeping in, was once fully eſtabliſhed, the reverence of the real body of Chriſt in the euchariſt beſtowed on this argument an additional force and influence. The monks knew how to avail themſelves of all theſe popular topics, and to ſet off their own character to the beſt advantage. They affected the greateſt auſterity of life and manners: They indulged themſelves in the higheſt ſtrains of devotion: They inveighed bitterly againſt the vices and pretended luxury of the age: They were particularly vehement againſt the diſſolute lives of the ſecular

* Oſberne.

clergy,

clergy, their rivals: Every inſtance of libertiniſm in any individual of that order was repreſented as a general corruption: And where other topics of defamation were wanting, their marriage became a ſure ſubject of invective, and their wives received the name of *concubine*, or other more opprobrious appellation. The ſecular clergy, on the other hand, who were numerous and rich, and poſſeſſed of the eccleſiaſtical dignities, defended themſelves with vigour, and endeavoured to retaliate upon their adverſaries. The people were thrown into agitation; and few inſtances occur of more violent diſſenſions, excited by the moſt material differences in religion; or rather the moſt frivolous: Since it is a juſt remark, that the more affinity there is between theological parties, the greater commonly is their animoſity.

The progreſs of the monks, which was become conſiderable, was ſomewhat retarded by the death of Edred, their partiſan, who expired after a reign of nine years. He left children; but as they were infants, his nephew Edwy, ſon of Edmund, was placed on the throne.

EDWY.

(955.) EDWY, at the time of his acceſſion, was not above ſixteen or ſeventeen years of age, was poſſeſſed of the moſt amiable figure, and was even endowed, according to authentic accounts, with the moſt promiſing virtues. He would have been the favourite of his people, had he not unhappily, at the commencement of his reign, been engaged in a controverſy with the monks, whoſe rage neither the graces of the body nor virtues of the mind could mitigate, and who have purſued his memory with the ſame unrelenting vengeance which they exerciſed againſt his perſon and dignity during his ſhort and unfortunate reign. There was a beautiful princeſs of the royal blood called Elgiva, who had made impreſſion on the tender heart of Edwy; and as he was of an age when the force of the paſſions firſt begins to be felt, he had ventured, contrary to the advice of his graveſt counſellors, and the remonſtrances of the more digniſied eccleſiaſtics,

ſiaſtics, to eſpouſe her; though ſhe was within the degrees of affinity, prohibited by the canon-law. As the auſterity, affected by the monks, made them particularly violent on this occaſion, Edwy entertained a ſtrong prepoſſeſſion againſt them; and ſeemed, on that account, determined not to ſecond their project, of expelling the ſeculars from all the convents, and of poſſeſſing themſelves of thoſe rich eſtabliſhments. War was therefore declared between the king and the monks; and the former ſoon found reaſon to repent his provoking ſuch dangerous enemies. On the day of his coronation, his nobility were aſſembled in a great hall, and were indulging themſelves in that riot and diſorder, which, from the example of their German anceſtors, had become habitual to the Engliſh; when Edwy, attracted by ſofter pleatures, retired into the queen's apartment, and in that privacy gave reins to his fondneſs towards his wife, which was only moderately checked by the preſence of her mother. Dunſtan conjectured the reaſon of the king's retreat; and carrying along with him Odo, archbiſhop of Canterbury, over whom he had gained an abſolute aſcendant, he burſt into the apartment, upbraided Edwy with his laſciviouſneſs, probably beſtowed on the queen the moſt opprobrious epithet that can be applied to her ſex, and tearing him from her arms, puſhed him back, in a diſgraceful manner, into the banquet of the nobles. Edwy, though young, and oppoſed by the prejudices of the people, found an opportunity of taking revenge for this public inſult. He queſtioned Dunſtan concerning the adminiſtration of the treaſury during the reign of his predeceſſor; and when that miniſter refuſed to give any account of money expended, as he affirmed, by orders of the late king, he accuſed him of malverſation in his office, and baniſhed him the kingdom. But Dunſtan's cabal was not unactive during his abſence: They filled the public with high panegyrics on his ſanctity: They exclaimed againſt the impiety of the king and queen: And having poiſoned the minds of the people by theſe declamations, they proceeded to ſtill more outrageous acts of violence againſt the royal authority.

rity. Archbiſhop Odo ſent into the palace a party of ſoldiers, who ſeized the queen; and having burned her face with a red-hot iron, in order to deſtroy that fatal beauty which had ſeduced Edwy, they carried her by force into Ireland, there to remain in perpetual exile. Edwy, finding it in vain to reſiſt, was obliged to conſent to his divorce, which was pronounced by Odo; and a cataſtrophe, ſtill more diſmal, awaited the unhappy Elgiva. That amiable princeſs being cured of her wounds, and having even obliterated the ſcars with which Odo had hoped to deface her beauty, returned into England, and was flying to the embraces of the king, whom ſhe ſtill regarded as her huſband; when ſhe fell into the hands of a party whom the primate had ſent to intercept her. Nothing but her death could now give ſecurity to Odo and the monks; and the moſt cruel death was requiſite to ſatiate their vengeance. She was hamſtringed; and expired a few days after at Gloceſter in the moſt acute torments. The Engliſh, blinded with ſuperſtition, inſtead of being ſhocked with his inhumanity, exclaimed that the misfortunes of Edwy and his conſort were a juſt judgment for their diſſolute contempt of the eccleſiaſtical ſtatutes. They even proceeded to rebellion againſt their ſovereign; and having placed Edgar at their head, the younger brother of Edwy, a boy of thirteen years of age, they ſoon put him in poſſeſſion of Mercia, Northumberland, Eaſt-Anglia; and chaſed Edwy into the ſouthern counties. That it might not be doubtful at whoſe inſtigation this revolt was undertaken, Dunſtan returned into England, and took upon him the government of Edgar and his party. He was firſt inſtalled in the ſee of Worceſter, then in that of London, and, on Odo's death, and the violent expulſion of Brithelm, his ſucceſſor, in that of Canterbury; of all which he long kept poſſeſſion. Odo is tranſmitted to us by the monks under the character of a man of piety: Dunſtan was even canonized; and is one of thoſe numerous ſaints of the ſame ſtamp who diſgrace the Romiſh calendar. Meanwhile the unhappy Edwy was excommunicated, and purſued with unrelenting vengeance; but

but his death, which happened ſoon after, freed his enemies from all farther inquietude, and gave Edgar peaceable poſſeſſion of the government *.

EDGAR.

THIS prince, who mounted the throne in ſuch early youth, ſoon diſcovered an excellent capacity in the adminiſtration of affairs; and his reign is one of the moſt fortunate that we meet with in the ancient Engliſh hiſtory. He ſhowed no averſion to war; he made the wiſeſt preparations againſt invaders: And by this vigour and foreſight he was enabled, without any danger of ſuffering inſults, to indulge his inclination towards peace, and to employ himſelf in ſupporting and improving the internal government of his kingdom. He maintained a body of diſciplined troops; which he quartered in the north, in order to keep the mutinous Northumbrians in ſubjection, and to repel the inroads of the Scots. He built and ſupported a powerful navy; and that he might retain the ſeamen in the practice of their duty, and always preſent a formidable armament to his enemies, he ſtationed three ſquadrons off the coaſt, and ordered them to make, from time to time, the circuit of his dominions †. The foreign Danes dared not to approach a country which appeared in ſuch a poſture of defence: The domeſtic Danes ſaw inevitable deſtruction to be the conſequence of their tumults and inſurrections: The neighbouring ſovereigns, the king of Scotland, the princes of Wales, of the iſle of Man, of the Orkneys, and even of Ireland, were reduced to pay ſubmiſſion to ſo formidable a monarch. He carried his ſuperiority to a great height, and might have excited an univerſal combination againſt him, had not his power been ſo well eſtabliſhed, as to deprive his enemies of all hopes of ſhaking it. It is ſaid, that, reſiding once at Cheſter, and having purpoſed to go by water to the abbey of St. John

* See note [B] at the end of the volume.
† See note [C] at the end of the volume.

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the Baptiſt, he obliged eight of his tributary princes to row him in a barge upon the Dee. The Engliſh hiſtorians are fond of mentioning the name of Kenneth III. king of Scots, among the number: The Scottiſh hiſtorians either deny the fact, or aſſert that their king, if ever he acknowledged himſelf a vaſſal to Edgar, did him homage, not for his crown, but for the dominions which he held in England.

But the chief means by which Edgar maintained his authority, and preſerved public peace, was the paying of court to Dunſtan and the monks, who had at firſt placed him on the throne, and who, by their pretenſions to ſuperior ſanctity and purity of manners, had acquired an aſcendant over the people. He favoured their ſcheme for diſpoſſeſſing the ſecular canons of all the monaſteries; he beſtowed preferment on none but their partiſans; he allowed Dunſtan to reſign the ſee of Worceſter into the hands of Oſwald, one of his creatures; and to place Ethelwold, another of them, in that of Wincheſter; he conſulted theſe prelates in the adminiſtration of all eccleſiaſtical, and even in that of many civil affairs; and though the vigour of his own genius prevented him from being implicitly guided by them, the king and the biſhops found ſuch advantages in their mutual agreement, that they always acted in concert, and united their influence in preſerving the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom.

In order to complete the great work of placing the new order of monks in all the convents, Edgar ſummoned a general council of the prelates and the heads of the religious orders. He here inveighed againſt the diſſolute lives of the ſecular clergy; the ſmallneſs of their tonſure, which, it is probable, maintained no longer any reſemblance to the crown of thorns; their negligence in attending the exerciſe of their function; their mixing with the laity in the pleaſures of gaming, hunting, dancing, and ſinging; and their openly living with concubines, by which it is commonly ſuppoſed he meant their wives. He then turned himſelf to Dunſtan the primate; and in the name of king Edred, whom he ſuppoſed to

look down from heaven with indignation against all those enormities, he thus addressed him: "It is you, Dunstan, "by whose advice I founded monasteries, built churches, "and expended my treasure in the support of religion "and religious houses. You were my counsellor and "assistant in all my schemes: You were the director of "my conscience: To you I was obedient in all things. "When did you call for supplies, which I refused you? "Was my assistance ever wanting to the poor? Did I "deny support and establishments to the clergy and the "convents? Did I not hearken to your instructions, "who told me that these charities were, of all others, "the most grateful to my Maker, and fixed a perpetual "fund for the support of religion? And are all our "pious endeavours now frustrated by the dissolute lives "of the priests? Not that I throw any blame on you: "You have reasoned, besought, inculcated, inveighed: "But it now behoves you to use sharper and more vigor- "ous remedies; and conjoining your spiritual autho- "rity with the civil power, to purge effectually the tem- "ple of God from thieves and intruders." It is easy to imagine, that this harangue had the desired effect; and that, when the king and prelates thus concurred with the popular prejudices, it was not long before the monks prevailed, and established their new discipline in almost all the convents.

We may remark, that the declamations against the secular clergy are, both here and in all the historians, conveyed in general terms; and as that order of men are commonly restrained by the decency of their character, it is difficult to believe that the complaints against their dissolute manners could be so universally just as is pretended. It is more probable that the monks paid court to the populace by an affected austerity of life; and representing the most innocent liberties, taken by the other clergy, as great and unpardonable enormities, thereby prepared the way for the increase of their own power and influence. Edgar, however, like a true politician, concurred with the prevailing party; and he even indulged them in pretensions, which, though they might,

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when complied with, engage the monks to ſupport royal authority during his own reign, proved afterwards dangerous to his ſucceſſors, and gave diſturbance to the whole civil power. He ſeconded the policy of the court of Rome, in granting to ſome monaſteries an exemption from epiſcopal juriſdiction: He allowed the convents, even thoſe of royal foundation, to uſurp the election of their own abbot: And he admitted their forgeries of ancient charters, by which, from the pretended grant of former kings, they aſſumed many privileges and immunities.

Theſe merits of Edgar have procured him the higheſt panegyrics from the monks; and he is tranſmitted to us, not only under the character of a conſummate ſtateſman and an active prince, praiſes to which he ſeems to have been juſtly entitled, but under that of a great ſaint and a man of virtue. But nothing could more betray both his hypocriſy in inveighing againſt the licentiouſneſs of the ſecular clergy, and the intereſted ſpirit of his partiſans, in beſtowing ſuch eulogies on his piety, than the uſual tenour of his conduct, which was licentious to the higheſt degree, and violated every law, human and divine. Yet thoſe very monks, who, as we are told by Ingulf, a very ancient hiſtorian, had no idea of any moral or religious merit, except chaſtity and obedience, not only connived at his enormities, but loaded him with the greateſt praiſes. Hiſtory, however, has preſerved ſome inſtances of his amours, from which, as from a ſpecimen, we may form a conjecture of the reſt.

Edgar broke into a convent, carried off Editha, a nun, by force, and even committed violence on her perſon. For this act of ſacrilege he was reprimanded by Dunſtan; and that he might reconcile himſelf to the church, he was obliged not to ſeparate from his miſtreſs, but to abſtain from wearing his crown during ſeven years, and to deprive himſelf ſo long of that vain ornament: A puniſhment very unequal to that which had been inflicted on the unfortunate Edwy, who, for a marriage which in the ſtricteſt ſenſe could only deſerve the name of irregular, was expelled his kingdom, ſaw his queen treated

with ſingular barbarity, was loaded with calumnies, and has been repreſented to us under the moſt odious colours. Such is the aſcendant which may be attained, by hypocriſy and cabal, over mankind!

There was another miſtreſs of Edgar's with whom he firſt formed a connection by a kind of accident. Paſſing one day by Andover, he lodged in the houſe of a nobleman, whoſe daughter, being endowed with all the graces of perſon and behaviour, inflamed him at firſt ſight with the higheſt deſire; and he reſolved by any expedient to gratify it. As he had not leiſure to employ courtſhip or addreſs for attaining his purpoſe, he went directly to her mother, declared the violence of his paſſion, and deſired that the young lady might be allowed to paſs that very night with him. The mother was a woman of virtue, and determined not to diſhonour her daughter and her family by compliance; but being well acquainted with the impetuoſity of the king's temper, ſhe thought it would be eaſier, as well as ſafer, to deceive than refuſe him. She feigned therefore a ſubmiſſion to his will; but ſecretly ordered a waiting-maid, of no diſagreeable figure, to ſteal into the king's bed, after all the company ſhould be retired to reſt. In the morning, before day-break, the damſel, agreeably to the injunctions of her miſtreſs, offered to retire; but Edgar, who had no reſerve in his pleaſures, and whoſe love to his bed fellow was rather inflamed by enjoyment, refuſed his conſent, and employed force and intreaties to detain her. Elfleda (for that was the name of the maid), truſting to her own charms, and to the love with which, ſhe hoped, ſhe had now inſpired the king, made probably but a faint reſiſtance; and the return of light diſcovered the deceit to Edgar. He had paſſed a night ſo much to his ſatisfaction, that he expreſſed no diſpleaſure with the old lady on account of her fraud; his love was transferred to Elfleda; ſhe became his favourite miſtreſs; and maintained her aſcendant over him till his marriage with Elfrida.

The circumſtances of his marriage with this lady were more ſingular and more criminal. Elfrida was daughter and

and heir of Olgar earl of Devonſhire; and though ſhe had been educated in the country, and had never appeared at court, ſhe had filled all England with the reputation of her beauty. Edgar himſelf, who was indifferent to no accounts of this nature, found his curioſity excited by the frequent panegyrics which he heard of Elfrida; and reflecting on her noble birth, he reſolved, if he found her charms anſwerable to their fame, to obtain poſſeſſion of her on honourable terms. He communicated his intention to earl Athelwold, his favourite; but uſed the precaution, before he made any advances to her parents, to order that nobleman, on ſome pretence, to pay them a viſit, and to bring him a certain account of the beauty of their daughter. Athelwold, when introduced to the young lady, found general report to have fallen ſhort of the truth; and being actuated by the moſt vehement love, he determined to ſacrifice to his new paſſion his fidelity to his maſter, and to the truſt repoſed in him. He returned to Edgar, and told him, that the riches alone, and high quality of Elfrida, had been the ground of the admiration paid her, and that her charms, far from being anywiſe extraordinary, would have been overlooked in a woman of inferior ſtation. When he had, by this deceit, diverted the king from his purpoſe, he took an opportunity, after ſome interval, of turning again the converſation on Elfrida: He remarked, that though the parentage and fortune of the lady had not produced on him, as on others, any illuſion with regard to her beauty, he could not forbear reflecting that ſhe would, on the whole, be an advantageous match for him, and might, by her birth and riches, make him ſufficient compenſation for the homelineſs of her perſon. If the king, therefore, gave his approbation, he was determined to make propoſals in his own behalf to the earl of Devonſhire, and doubted not to obtain his, as well as the young lady's conſent to the marriage. Edgar, pleaſed with an expedient for eſtabliſhing his favourite's fortune, not only exhorted him to execute his purpoſe, but forwarded his ſucceſs by his recommendations to the parents of Elfrida; and Athelwold

was ſoon made happy in the poſſeſſion of his miſtreſs. Dreading, however, the detection of the artifice, he employed every pretence for detaining Elfrida in the country, and for keeping her at a diſtance from Edgar.

The violent paſſion of Athelwold had rendered him blind to the neceſſary conſequences which muſt attend his conduct, and the advantages which the numerous enemies that always purſue a royal favourite, would, by its means, be able to make againſt him. Edgar was ſoon informed of the truth; but before he would execute vengeance on Athelwold's treachery, he reſolved to ſatisfy himſelf with his own eyes of the certainty and full extent of his guilt. He told him, that he intended to pay him a viſit in his caſtle, and be introduced to the acquaintance of his new-married wife; and Athelwold, as he could not refuſe the honour, only craved leave to go before him a few hours, that he might the better prepare every thing for his reception. He then diſcovered the whole matter to Elfrida; and begged her, if ſhe had any regard either to her own honour or his life, to conceal from Edgar, by every circumſtance of dreſs and behaviour, that fatal beauty which had ſeduced him from fidelity to his friend, and had betrayed him into ſo many falſehoods. Elfrida promiſed compliance, though nothing was farther from her intentions. She deemed herſelf little beholden to Athelwold for a paſſion which had deprived her of a crown; and knowing the force of her own charms, ſhe did not deſpair even yet of reaching that dignity, of which her huſband's artifice had bereaved her. She appeared before the king with all the advantages which the richeſt attire and the moſt engaging airs could beſtow upon her, and ſhe excited at once in his boſom the higheſt love towards herſelf, and the moſt furious deſire of revenge againſt her huſband. He knew, however, to diſſemble theſe paſſions; and ſeducing Athelwold into a wood, on pretence of hunting, he ſtabbed him with his own hand, and ſoon after publicly eſpouſed Elfrida.

Before we conclude our account of this reign, we muſt mention two circumſtances, which are remarked by

by hiſtorians. The reputation of Edgar allured a great number of foreigners to viſit his court; and he gave them encouragement to ſettle in England. We are told that they imported all the vices of their reſpective countries, and contributed to corrupt the ſimple manners of the natives: But as this ſimplicity of manners, ſo highly and often ſo injudiciouſly extolled, did not preſerve them from barbarity and treachery, the greateſt of all vices, and the moſt incident to a rude uncultivated people, we ought perhaps to deem their acquaintance with foreigners rather an advantage; as it tended to enlarge their views, and to cure them of thoſe illiberal prejudices and ruſtic manners to which iſlanders are often ſubject.

Another remarkable incident of this reign was the extirpation of wolves from England. This advantage was attained by the induſtrious policy of Edgar. He took great pains in hunting and purſuing thoſe ravenous animals; and when he found that all that eſcaped him had taken ſhelter in the mountains and foreſts of Wales, he changed the tribute of money impoſed on the Welſh princes by Athelſtan, his predeceſſor, into an annual tribute of three hundred heads of wolves; which produced ſuch diligence in hunting them, that the animal has been no more ſeen in this iſland.

Edgar died, after a reign of ſixteen years, and in the thirty-third of his age. He was ſucceeded by Edward, whom he had by his firſt marriage with the daughter of earl Ordmer.

EDWARD THE MARTYR.

(957.) THE ſucceſſion of this prince, who was only fifteen years of age at his father's death, did not take place without much difficulty and oppoſition. Elfrida, his ſtep-mother, had a ſon, Ethelred, ſeven years old, whom ſhe attempted to raiſe to the throne: She affirmed, that Edgar's marriage with the mother of Edward was expoſed to inſuperable objections; and as ſhe had poſſeſſed great credit with her huſband, ſhe had found means to acquire partiſans, who ſeconded all her pretenſions.

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But the title of Edward was ſupported by many advantages. He was appointed ſucceſſor by the will of his father: He was approaching to man's eſtate, and might ſoon be able to take into his own hands the reins of government: The principal nobility, dreading the imperious temper of Elfrida, were averſe to her ſon's government, which muſt enlarge her authority, and probably put her in poſſeſſion of the regency: Above all, Dunſtan, whoſe character of ſanctity had given him the higheſt credit with the people, had eſpouſed the cauſe of Edward, over whom he had already acquired a great aſcendant; and he was determined to execute the will of Edgar in his favour. To cut off all oppoſite pretenſions, Dunſtan reſolutely anointed and crowned the young prince at Kingſton; and the whole kingdom, without farther diſpute, ſubmitted to him.

It was of great importance to Dunſtan and the monks, to place on the throne a king favourable to their cauſe: The ſecular clergy had ſtill partiſans in England, who wiſhed to ſupport them in the poſſeſſion of the convents, and of the eccleſiaſtical authority. On the firſt intelligence of Edgar's death, Alfere, duke of Mercia, expelled the new orders of monks from all the monaſteries which lay within his juriſdiction; but Elfwin duke of Eaſt-Anglia, and Brithnot duke of the Eaſt-Saxons, protected them within their territories, and inſiſted upon the execution of the late laws enacted in their favour. In order to ſettle this controverſy, there were ſummoned ſeveral ſynods, which, according to the practice of thoſe times, conſiſted partly of eccleſiaſtical members, partly of the lay nobility. The monks were able to prevail in theſe aſſemblies; though, as it appears, contrary to the ſecret wiſhes, if not the declared inclination, of the leading men in the nation: They had more invention in forging miracles to ſupport their cauſe; or having been ſo fortunate as to obtain, by their pretended auſterities, the character of piety, their miracles were more credited by the populace.

In one ſynod, Dunſtan, finding the majority of votes againſt him, roſe up, and informed the audience that he

he had that inſtant received an immediate revelation in behalf of the monks: The aſſembly was ſo aſtoniſhed at this intelligence, or probably ſo overawed by the populace, that they proceeded no farther in their deliberations. In another ſynod, a voice iſſued from the cruciſix, and informed the members, that the eſtabliſhment of the monks was founded on the will of heaven, and could not be oppoſed without impiety. But the miracle performed in the third ſynod was ſtill more alarming: The floor of the hall in which the aſſembly met ſunk of a ſudden, and a great number of the members were either bruiſed or killed by the fall. It was remarked, that Dunſtan had that day prevented the king from attending the ſynod, and that the beam, on which his own chair ſtood, was the only one that did not ſink under the weight of the aſſembly: But theſe circumſtances, inſtead of begetting any ſuſpicion of contrivance, were regarded as the ſureſt proof of the immediate interpoſition of Providence in behalf of thoſe favourites of heaven.

Edward lived four years after his acceſſion, and there paſſed nothing memorable during his reign. His death alone was memorable and tragical. This young prince was endowed with the moſt amiable innocence of manners; and as his own intentions were always pure, he was incapable of entertaining any ſuſpicion againſt others. Though his ſtep-mother had oppoſed his ſucceſſion, and had raiſed a party in favour of her own ſon, he always ſhewed her marks of regard, and even expreſſed, on all occaſions, the moſt tender affection towards his brother. He was hunting one day in Dorſetſhire; and being led by the chaſe near Corfe-caſtle, where Elfrida reſided, he took the opportunity of paying her a viſit, unattended by any of his retinue, and he thereby preſented her with the opportunity which ſhe had long wiſhed for. After he had mounted his horſe, he deſired ſome liquor to be brought him: While he was holding the cup to his head, a ſervant of Elfrida approached him, and gave him a ſtab behind. The prince, finding himſelf wounded, put ſpurs to his horſe; but becoming faint by loſs of blood, he fell from the ſaddle,

ſaddle, his foot ſtuck in the ſtirrup, and he was dragged along by his unruly horſe till he expired. Being tracked by the blood, his body was found, and was privately interred at Wareham by his ſervants.

The youth and innocence of this prince, with his tragical death, begat ſuch compaſſion among the people, that they believed miracles to be wrought at his tomb; and they gave him the appellation of Martyr, though his murder had no connexion with any religious principle or opinion. Elfrida built monaſteries, and performed many penances, in order to atone for her guilt; but could never, by all her hypocriſy or remorſes, recover the good opinion of the public, though ſo eaſily deluded in thoſe ignorant ages.

CHAP. III.

Ethelred—Settlement of the Normans—Edmond Ironſide—Canute—Harold Harefoot—Hardicanute—Edward the Confeſſor—Harold.

ETHELRED.

(978.) THE freedom which England had ſo long enjoyed from the depredations of the Danes, ſeems to have proceeded, partly from the eſtabliſhments which that piratical nation had obtained in the north of France, and which employed all their ſuperfluous hands to people and maintain them; partly from the vigour and warlike ſpirit of a long race of Engliſh princes, who preſerved the kingdom in a poſture of defence by ſea and land, and either prevented or repelled every attempt of the invaders. But a new generation of men being now ſprung up in the northern regions, who could no longer diſburthen themſelves on Normandy; the Engliſh had reaſon to dread that the Danes would again viſit an iſland to which they were invited, both by the memory of their paſt ſucceſſes, and by the expectation of aſſiſtance from

from their countrymen, who, though long eſtabliſhed in the kingdom, were not yet thoroughly incorporated with the natives, nor had entirely forgotten their inveterate habits of war and depredation. And as the reigning prince was a minor, and even when he attained to man's eſtate, never diſcovered either courage or capacity ſufficient to govern his own ſubjects, much leſs to repel a formidable enemy, the people might juſtly apprehend the worſt calamities from ſo dangerous a criſis.

The Danes, before they durſt attempt any important enterpriſe againſt England, made an inconſiderable deſcent by way of trial; and having landed from ſeven veſſels near Southampton (981), they ravaged the country, enriched themſelves by ſpoil, and departed with impunity. Six years after, they made a like attempt in the weſt, and met with like ſucceſs. The invaders, having now found affairs in a very different ſituation from that in which they formerly appeared, encouraged their countrymen to aſſemble a greater force, and to hope for more conſiderable advantages. They landed in Eſſex (991), under the command of two leaders; and having defeated and ſlain at Maldon, Brithnot, duke of that county, who ventured, with a ſmall body, to attack them, they ſpread their devaſtations over all the neighbouring provinces. In this extremity, Ethelred, to whom hiſtorians give the epithet of the *Unready*, inſtead of rouſing his people to defend with courage their honour and their property, hearkened to the advice of Siricius archbiſhop of Canterbury, which was ſeconded by many of the degenerate nobility; and paying the enemy the ſum of ten thouſand pounds, he bribed them to depart the kingdom. This ſhameful expedient was attended with the ſucceſs which might be expected. The Danes next year appeared off the eaſtern coaſt, in hopes of ſubduing a people who defended themſelves by their money, which invited aſſailants, inſtead of their arms, which repelled them. But the Engliſh, ſenſible of their folly, had, in the interval, aſſembled in a great council, and had determined to collect at London a fleet able to give

give battle to the enemy; though that judicious measure failed of ſucceſs, from the treachery of Alfric duke of Mercia, whoſe name is infamous in the annals of that age, by the calamities which his repeated perfidy brought upon his country. This nobleman had, in 983, ſucceeded to his father, Alfere, in that extenſive command; but being deprived of it two years after, and baniſhed the kingdom, he was obliged to employ all his intrigue, and all his power, which was too great for a ſubject, to be reſtored to his country, and reinſtated in his authority. Having had experience of the credit and malevolence of his enemies, he thenceforth truſted for ſecurity, not to his ſervices, or to the affections of his fellow-citizens, but to the influence which he had obtained over his vaſſals, and to the public calamities, which he thought muſt, in every revolution, render his aſſiſtance neceſſary. Having fixed this reſolution, he determined to prevent all ſuch ſucceſſes as might eſtabliſh the royal authority, or render his own ſituation dependent or precarious. As the Engliſh had formed the plan of ſurrounding and deſtroying the Daniſh fleet in harbour, he privately informed the enemy of their danger; and when they put to ſea, in conſequence of this intelligence, he deſerted to them, with the ſquadron under his command, the night before the engagement, and thereby diſappointed all the efforts of his countrymen. Ethelred, enraged at his perfidy, ſeized his ſon Alfgar, and ordered his eyes to be put out. But ſuch was the power of Alfric, that he again forced himſelf into authority; and though he had given this ſpecimen of his character, and received this grievous provocation, it was found neceſſary to entruſt him anew with the government of Mercia. This conduct of the court, which in all its circumſtances is ſo barbarous, weak, and imprudent, both merited and prognoſticated the moſt grievous calamities.

(993.) The northern invaders, now well acquainted with the defenceleſs condition of England, made a powerful deſcent under the command of Sweyn king of Denmark, and Olave king of Norway; and ſailing up the Humber,

Humber, ſpread on all ſides their deſtructive ravages. Lindeſey was laid waſte; Banbury was deſtroyed; and all the Northumbrians, though moſtly of Daniſh deſcent, were conſtrained either to join the invaders, or to ſuffer under their depredations. A powerful army was aſſembled to oppoſe the Danes, and a general action enſued; but the Engliſh were deſerted in the battle, from the cowardice or treachery of their three leaders, all of them men of Daniſh race, Frena, Frithegiſt, and Godwin, who gave the example of a ſhameful flight to the troops under their command.

Encouraged by this ſucceſs, and ſtill more by the contempt which it inſpired for their enemy, the pirates ventured to attack the centre of the kingdom; and entering the Thames in ninety-four veſſels, laid ſiege to London, and threatened it with total deſtruction. But the citizens, alarmed at the danger, and firmly united among themſelves, made a bolder defence than the cowardice of the nobility and gentry gave the invaders reaſon to apprehend; and the beſiegers, after ſuffering the greateſt hardſhips, were finally fruſtrated in their attempt. In order to revenge themſelves, they laid waſte Eſſex, Suſſex, and Hampſhire; and having there procured horſes, they were thereby enabled to ſpread, through the more inland counties, the fury of their depredations. In this extremity, Ethelred and his nobles had recourſe to the former expedient; and ſending ambaſſadors to the two northern kings, they promiſed them ſubſiſtence and tribute, on condition they would, for the preſent, put an end to their ravages, and ſoon after depart the kingdom. Sweyn and Olave agreed to the terms, and peaceably took up their quarters at Southampton, where the ſum of ſixteen thouſand pounds was paid to them. Olave even made a journey to Andover, where Ethelred reſided; and he received the rite of confirmation from the Engliſh biſhops, as well as many rich preſents from the king. He here promiſed that he would never more infeſt the Engliſh territories; and he faithfully fulfilled the engagement. This prince receives the appellation of St. Olave from the church of

Rome; and, notwithſtanding the general preſumption which lies either againſt the underſtanding or morals of every one who in thoſe ignorant ages was dignified with that title, he ſeems to have been a man of merit and of virtue. Sweyn, though leſs ſcrupulous than Olave, was conſtrained, upon the departure of the Norwegian prince, to evacuate alſo the kingdom with all his followers.

(997.) This compoſition brought only a ſhort interval to the miſeries of the Engliſh. The Daniſh pirates appeared ſoon after in the Severne; and having committed ſpoil in Wales, as well as in Cornwal and Devonſhire, they ſailed round to the ſouth coaſt, and entering the Tamar, completed the devaſtation of theſe two counties. They then returned to the Briſtol channel; and penetrating into the country by the Avon, ſpread themſelves over all that neighbourhood, and carried fire and ſword even into Dorſetſhire. They next (998) changed the ſeat of war; and after ravaging the Iſle of Wight, they entered the Thames and Medway, and laid ſiege to Rocheſter, where they defeated the Kentiſh-men in a pitched battle. After this victory, the whole province of Kent was made a ſcene of ſlaughter, fire, and devaſtation. The extremity of theſe miſeries forced the Engliſh into counſels for common defence both by ſea and land; but the weakneſs of the king, the diviſions among the nobility, the treachery of ſome, the cowardice of others, the want of concert in all, fruſtrated every endeavour: Their fleets and armies either came too late to attack the enemy, or were repulſed with diſhonour; and the people were thus equally ruined by reſiſtance or by ſubmiſſion. The Engliſh, therefore, deſtitute both of prudence and unanimity in council, of courage and conduct in the field, had recourſe to the ſame weak expedient which by experience they had already found ſo ineffectual: They offered the Danes to buy peace, by paying them a large ſum of money. Theſe ravagers roſe continually in their demands; and now required the payment of 24 000 pounds, to which the Engliſh were ſo mean and imprudent as to ſubmit. The departure

ture of the Danes procured them another ſhort interval of repoſe, which they enjoyed as if it were to be perpetual, without making any effectual preparations for a more vigorous reſiſtance upon the next return of the enemy.

Beſides receiving this ſum, the Danes were engaged by another motive to depart a kingdom which appeared ſo little in a ſituation to reſiſt their efforts: They were invited over by their countrymen in Normandy, who at this time were hard preſſed by the arms of Robert king of France, and who found it difficult to defend the ſettlement which, with ſo much advantage to themſelves and glory to their nation, they had made in that country. It is probable alſo, that Ethelred, obſerving the cloſe connections thus maintained among all the Danes, however divided in government or ſituation, was deſirous of forming an alliance with that formidable people: For this purpoſe, being now a widower, he made his addreſſes to Emma, ſiſter to Richard II. duke of Normandy, and he ſoon ſucceeded in his negotiation. The princeſs came over this year (1001) to England, and was married to Ethelred.

In the end of the ninth, and beginning of the tenth century, when the north, not yet exhauſted by that multitude of people, or rather nations, which ſhe had ſucceſſively emitted, ſent forth a new race, not of conquerors, as before, but of pirates and ravagers, who infeſted the countries poſſeſſed by her once warlike ſons; lived Rollo, a petty prince or chieftain of Denmark, whoſe valour and abilities ſoon engaged the attention of his countrymen. He was expoſed in his youth to the jealouſy of the king of Denmark, who attacked his ſmall but independent principality; and who, being foiled in every aſſault, had recourſe at laſt to perfidy for effecting his purpoſe, which he had often attempted in vain by force of arms: He lulled Rollo into ſecurity by an inſidious peace; and falling ſuddenly upon him, murdered his brother and his braveſt officers, and forced him to fly for ſafety into Scandinavia. Here many of his ancient ſubjects, induced partly by affection to their

prince, partly by the oppreſſions of the Daniſh monarch, ranged themſelves under his ſtandard, and offered to follow him in every enterpriſe. Rollo, inſtead of attempting to recover his paternal dominions, where he muſt expect a vigorous reſiſtance from the Danes, determined to purſue an eaſier but more important undertaking, and to make his fortune, in imitation of his countrymen, by pillaging the richer and more ſouthern coaſts of Europe. He collected a body of troops, which, like that of all thoſe ravagers, was compoſed of Norwegians, Swedes, Friſians, Danes, and adventurers of all nations, who, being accuſtomed to a roving unſettled life, took delight in nothing but war and plunder. His reputation brought him aſſociates from all quarters; and a viſion, which he pretended to have appeared to him in his ſleep, and which, according to his interpretation of it, prognoſticated the greateſt ſucceſſes, proved alſo a powerful incentive with thoſe ignorant and ſuperſtitious people.

The firſt attempt made by Rollo was on England, near the end of Alfred's reign; when that great monarch, having ſettled Guthrum and his followers in Eaſt-Anglia, and others of thoſe freebooters in Northumberland, and having reſtored peace to his haraſſed country, had eſtabliſhed the moſt excellent military as well as civil inſtitutions among the Engliſh. The prudent Dane, finding that no advantages could be gained over ſuch a people, governed by ſuch a prince, ſoon turned his enterpriſes againſt France, which he found more expoſed to his inroads; and during the reigns of Eudes, an uſurper, and of Charles the Simple, a weak prince, he committed the moſt deſtructive ravages both on the inland and maritime provinces of that kingdom. The French, having no means of defence againſt a leader, who united all the valour of his countrymen with the policy of more civilized nations, were obliged to ſubmit to the expedient practiſed by Alfred, and to offer the invaders a ſettlement in ſome of thoſe provinces which they had depopulated by their arms.

The

The reaſon why the Danes for many years purſued meaſures ſo different from thoſe which had been embraced by the Goths, Vandals, Franks, Burgundians, Lombards, and other northern conquerors, was the great difference in the method of attack which was practiſed by theſe ſeveral nations, and to which the nature of their reſpective ſituations neceſſarily confined them. The latter tribes, living in an inland country, made incurſions by land upon the Roman empire; and when they entered far into the frontiers, they were obliged to carry along with them their wives and families, whom they had no hopes of ſoon reviſiting, and who could not otherwiſe participate of their plunder. This circumſtance quickly made them think of forcing a ſettlement in the provinces which they had overrun; and theſe barbarians, ſpreading themſelves over the country, found an intereſt in protecting the property and induſtry of the people whom they had ſubdued. But the Danes and Norwegians, invited by their maritime ſituation, and obliged to maintain themſelves in their uncultivated country by fiſhing, had acquired ſome experience of navigation; and in their military excurſions purſued the method practiſed againſt the Roman empire by the more early Saxons: They made deſcents in ſmall bodies from their ſhips, or rather boats, and ravaging the coaſts, returned with the booty to their families, whom they could not conveniently carry along with them in thoſe hazardous enterpriſes. But when they increaſed their armaments, made incurſions into the inland countries, and found it ſafe to remain longer in the midſt of the enfeebled enemy, they had been accuſtomed to crowd their veſſels with their wives and children, and having no longer any temptation to return to their own country, they willingly embraced an opportunity of ſettling in the warm climates and cultivated fields of the ſouth.

Affairs were in this ſituation with Rollo and his followers, when Charles propoſed to relinquiſh to them part of the province formerly called Neuſtria, and to purchaſe peace on theſe hard conditions. After all the

terms were fully ſettled, there appeared only one circumſtance ſhocking to the haughty Dane: He was required to do homage to Charles for this province, and to put himſelf in that humiliating poſture impoſed on vaſſals by the rites of the feudal law. He long refuſed to ſubmit to this indignity; but being unwilling to loſe ſuch important advantages for a mere ceremony, he made a ſacrifice of his pride to his intereſt, and acknowledged himſelf, in form, the vaſſal of the French monarch. Charles gave him his daughter Giſla in marriage; and, that he might bind him faſter to his intereſts, made him a donation of a conſiderable territory, beſides that which he was obliged to ſurrender to him by his ſtipulations. When ſome of the French nobles informed him, that, in return for ſo generous a preſent, it was expected that he ſhould throw himſelf at the king's feet, and make ſuitable acknowledgments for his bounty; Rollo replied, that he would rather decline the preſent; and it was with ſome difficulty they could perſuade him to make that compliment by one of his captains. The Dane, commiſſioned for this purpoſe, full of indignation at the order, and deſpiſing ſo unwarlike a prince, caught Charles by the foot, and pretending to carry it to his mouth, that he might kiſs it, overthrew him before all his courtiers. The French, ſenſible of their preſent weakneſs, found it prudent to overlook this inſult.

Rollo, who was now in the decline of life, and was tired of wars and depredations, applied himſelf, with mature counſels, to the ſettlement of his new-acquired territory, which was thenceforth called Normandy; and he parcelled it out among his captains and followers. He followed, in this partition, the cuſtoms of the feudal law, which was then univerſally eſtabliſhed in the ſouthern countries of Europe, and which ſuited the peculiar circumſtances of that age. He treated the French ſubjects, who ſubmitted to him, with mildneſs and juſtice; he reclaimed his ancient followers from their ferocious violence; he eſtabliſhed law and order throughout his ſtate;

ſtate; and after a life ſpent in tumults and ravages, he died peaceably in a good old age, and left his dominions to his poſterity.

William I. who ſucceeded him, governed the dutchy twenty-five years; and, during that time, the Normans were thoroughly intermingled with the French, had acquired their language, had imitated their manners, and had made ſuch progreſs towards cultivation, that, on the death of William, his ſon Richard, though a minor, inherited his dominions: A ſure proof that the Normans were already ſomewhat advanced in civility, and that their government could now reſt ſecure on its laws and civil inſtitutions, and was not wholly ſuſtained by the abilities of the ſovereign. Richard, after a long reign of fifty-four years, was ſucceeded by his ſon of the ſame name, in the year 996; which was eighty-five years after the firſt eſtabliſhment of the Normans in France. This was the duke who gave his ſiſter Emma in marriage to Ethelred king of England, and who thereby formed connections with a country which his poſterity was ſo ſoon after deſtined to ſubdue.

The Danes had been eſtabliſhed during a longer period in England than in France; and though the ſimilarity of their original language to that of the Saxons, invited them to a more early coalition with the natives, they had hitherto found ſo little example of civilized manners among the Engliſh, that they retained all their ancient ferocity, and valued themſelves only on their national character of military bravery. The recent as well as more ancient atchievements of their countrymen, tended to ſupport this idea; and the Engliſh princes, particularly Athelſtan and Edgar, ſenſible of that ſuperiority, had been accuſtomed to keep in pay bodies of Daniſh troops, who were quartered about the country, and committed many violences upon the inhabitants. Theſe mercenaries had attained to ſuch a height of luxury, according to the old Engliſh writers, that they combed their hair once a day, bathed themſelves once a week, changed their clothes frequently; and by all theſe arts of effeminacy, as well as by their military character, had

had rendered themſelves ſo agreeable to the fair ſex, that they debauched the wives and daughters of the Engliſh, and diſhonoured many families. But what moſt provoked the inhabitants was, that, inſtead of defending them againſt invaders, they were ever ready to betray them to the foreign Danes, and to aſſociate themſelves with all ſtraggling parties of that nation. The animoſity between the inhabitants of Engliſh and Daniſh race had, from theſe repeated injuries, riſen to a great height; when Ethelred, from a policy incident to weak princes, embraced the cruel reſolution of maſſacring the latter, throughout all his dominions *. (1002.) Secret orders were diſpatched to commence the execution every-where on the ſame day; and the feſtival of St. Brice (Nov. 13), which fell on a Sunday, the day on which the Danes uſually bathed themſelves, was choſen for that purpoſe. It is needleſs to repeat the accounts tranſmitted concerning the barbarity of this maſſacre: The rage of the populace, excited by ſo many injuries, ſanctified by authority, and ſtimulated by example, diſtinguiſhed not between innocence and guilt, ſpared neither ſex nor age, and was not ſatiated without the tortures as well as death of the unhappy victims. Even Gunilda, ſiſter to the king of Denmark, who had married earl Paling, and had embraced Chriſtianity, was, by the advice of Edric earl of Wilts, ſeized and condemned to death by Ethelred, after ſeeing her huſband and children butchered before her face. This unhappy princeſs foretold, in the agonies of deſpair, that her murder would ſoon be avenged by the total ruin of the Engliſh nation.

(1003.) Never was prophecy better fulfilled; and never did barbarous policy prove more fatal to the authors. Sweyn and his Danes, who wanted but a pretence for invading the Engliſh, appeared off the weſtern coaſt, and threatened to take full revenge for the ſlaughter of their countrymen. Exeter fell firſt into their hands, from the negligence or treachery of earl Hugh, a Norman, who had been made governor by the intereſt of

* See note [D] at the end of the volume.

queen Emma. They began to ſpread their devaſtations over the country; when the Engliſh, ſenſible what outrages they muſt now expect from their barbarous and offended enemy, aſſembled more early, and in greater numbers than uſual, and made an appearance of vigorous reſiſtance. But all theſe preparations were fruſtrated by the treachery of duke Alfric, who was intruſted with the command, and who, feigning ſickneſs, refuſed to lead the army againſt the Danes, till it was diſpirited, and at laſt diſſipated, by his fatal miſconduct. Alfric ſoon after died; and Edric, a greater traitor than he, who had married the king's daughter, and had acquired a total aſcendant over him, ſucceeded Alfric in the government of Mercia, and in the command of the Engliſh armies. A great famine, proceeding partly from the bad ſeaſons, partly from the decay of agriculture, added to all the other miſeries of the inhabitants. The country, waſted by the Danes, haraſſed by the fruitleſs expeditions of its own forces, was reduced to the utmoſt deſolation; and at laſt (1007) ſubmitted to the infamy of purchaſing a precarious peace from the enemy, by the payment of 30,000 pounds.

The Engliſh endeavoured to employ this interval in making preparations againſt the return of the Danes, which they had reaſon ſoon to expect. A law was made, ordering the proprietors of eight hides of land to provide each a horſeman and a complete ſuit of armour; and thoſe of three hundred and ten hides to equip a ſhip for the defence of the coaſt. When this navy was aſſembled, which muſt have conſiſted of near eight hundred veſſels *, all hopes of its ſucceſs were diſappointed by the factions, animoſities, and diſſenſions of the nobility. Edric had impelled his brother Brightric to prefer an accuſation of treaſon againſt Wolfnoth, governor of Suſſex, the father of the famous earl Godwin; and that nobleman, well acquainted with the malevolence as well

* There were 243,600 hides in England. Conſequently the ſhips equipped muſt be 785. The cavalry was 30,450 men.

as

as power of his enemy, found no means of ſafety but in deſerting with twenty ſhips to the Danes. Brightric purſued him with a fleet of eighty ſail; but his ſhips being ſhattered in a tempeſt, and ſtranded on the coaſt, he was ſuddenly attacked by Wolfnoth, and all his veſſels burnt and deſtroyed. The imbecility of the king was little capable of repairing this misfortune: The treachery of Edric fruſtrated every plan for future defence: And the Engliſh navy, diſconcerted, diſcouraged, and divided, was at laſt ſcattered into its ſeveral harbours.

It is almoſt impoſſible, or would be tedious, to relate particularly all the miſeries to which the Engliſh were thenceforth expoſed. We hear of nothing but the ſacking and burning of towns; the devaſtation of the open country; the appearance of the enemy in every quarter of the kingdom; their cruel diligence in diſcovering any corner which had not been ranſacked by their former violence. The broken and disjointed narration of the ancient hiſtorians is here well adapted to the nature of the war, which was conducted by ſuch ſudden inroads as would have been dangerous even to an united and well-governed kingdom, but proved fatal, where nothing but a general conſternation and mutual diffidence and diſſenſion prevailed. The governors of one province refuſed to march to the aſſiſtance of another, and were at laſt terrified from aſſembling their forces for the defence of their own province. General councils were ſummoned; but either no reſolution was taken, or none was carried into execution. And the only expedient in which the Engliſh agreed, was the baſe and imprudent one of buying a new peace from the Danes, by the payment of 48,000 pounds.

(1011.) This meaſure did not bring them even that ſhort interval of repoſe which they had expected from it. The Danes, diſregarding all engagements, continued their devaſtations and hoſtilities; levied a new contribution of 8000 pounds upon the county of Kent alone; murdered the archbiſhop of Canterbury, who had refuſed to countenance this exaction; and the Engliſh nobility

nobility found no other resource than that of submitting every-where to the Danish monarch, swearing allegiance to him, and delivering him hostages for their fidelity. (1013.) Ethelred, equally afraid of the violence of the enemy and the treachery of his own subjects, fled into Normandy, whither he had sent before him queen Emma, and her two sons Alfred and Edward. Richard received his unhappy guests with a generosity that does honour to his memory.

(1014.) The king had not been above six weeks in Normandy, when he heard of the death of Sweyn, who expired at Gainsborough, before he had time to establish himself in his new-acquired dominions. The English prelates and nobility, taking advantage of this event, sent over a deputation to Normandy; invited Ethelred to return to them, expressing a desire of being again governed by their native prince, and intimating their hopes that, being now tutored by experience, he would avoid all those errors which had been attended with such misfortunes to himself and to his people. But the misconduct of Ethelred was incurable; and on his resuming the government, he discovered the same incapacity, indolence, cowardice, and credulity, which had so often exposed him to the insults of his enemies. His son-in-law, Edric, notwithstanding his repeated treasons, retained such influence at court, as to instil into the king jealousies of Sigefert and Morcar, two of the chief nobles of Mercia: Edric allured them into his house, where he murdered them; while Ethelred participated in the infamy of the action, by confiscating their estates, and thrusting into a convent the widow of Sigefert. She was a woman of singular beauty and merit; and in a visit which was paid her, during her confinement, by prince Edmond, the king's eldest son, she inspired him with so violent an affection, that he released her from the convent, and soon after married her, without the consent of his father.

Meanwhile the English found in Canute, the son and successor of Sweyn, an enemy no less terrible than the prince from whom death had so lately delivered them.

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He ravaged the eaſtern coaſt with mercileſs fury, and put aſhore all the Engliſh hoſtages at Sandwich, after having cut off their hands and noſes. He was obliged, by the neceſſity of his affairs, to make a voyage to Denmark; but returning ſoon after, he continued his depredations along the ſouthern coaſt: He even broke into the counties of Dorſet, Wilts, and Somerſet; where an army was aſſembled againſt him, under the command of prince Edmond and duke Edric. The latter ſtill continued his perfidious machinations; and after endeavouring in vain to get the prince into his power, he found means to diſperſe the army; and he then (1015) openly deſerted to Canute with forty veſſels.

Notwithſtanding this misfortune, Edmond was not diſconcerted; but aſſembling all the force of England, was in a condition to give battle to the enemy. The king had had ſuch frequent experience of perfidy among his ſubjects, that he had loſt all confidence in them: He remained at London, pretending ſickneſs, but really from apprehenſions that they intended to buy their peace, by delivering him into the hands of his enemies. The army called aloud for their ſovereign to march at their head againſt the Danes; and on his refuſal to take the field, they were ſo diſcouraged, that thoſe vaſt preparations became ineffectual for the defence of the kingdom. Edmond, deprived of all regular ſupplies to maintain his ſoldiers, was obliged to commit equal ravages with thoſe which were practiſed by the Danes; and after making ſome fruitleſs expeditions into the north, which had ſubmitted entirely to Canute's power, he retired to London, determined there to maintain, to the laſt extremity, the ſmall remains of Engliſh liberty. He here found every thing in confuſion by the death of the king, who expired (1016), after an unhappy and inglorious reign of thirty-five years. He left two ſons by his firſt marriage, Edmond, who ſucceeded him, and Edwy, whom Canute afterwards murdered. His two ſons by the ſecond marriage, Alfred and Edward, were immediately, upon Ethelred's death, conveyed into Normandy by queen Emma.

EDMOND IRONSIDE.

THIS prince, who received the name of Ironſide from his hardy valour, poſſeſſed courage and abilities ſufficient to have prevented his country from ſinking into thoſe calamities, but not to raiſe it from that abyſs of miſery, into which it had already fallen. Among the other misfortunes of the Engliſh, treachery and diſaffection had creeped in among the nobility and prelates; and Edmond found no better expedient for ſtopping the farther progreſs of theſe fatal evils, than to lead his army inſtantly into the field, and to employ them againſt the common enemy. After meeting with ſome ſucceſs at Gillingham, he prepared himſelf to decide, in one general engagement, the fate of his crown; and at Scoerſton, in the county of Gloceſter, he offered battle to the enemy, who were commanded by Canute and Edric. Fortune, in the beginning of the day, declared for him; but Edric, having cut off the head of one Oſmer, whoſe countenance reſembled that of Edmond, fixed it on a ſpear, carried it through the ranks in triumph, and called aloud to the Engliſh, that it was time to fly; for, behold! the head of their ſovereign. And though Edmond, obſerving the conſternation of the troops, took off his helmet and ſhowed himſelf to them, the utmoſt he could gain by his activity and valour was to leave the victory undecided. Edric now took a ſurer method to ruin him, by pretending to deſert to him; and as Edmond was well acquainted with his power, and probably knew no other of the chief nobility in whom he could repoſe more confidence, he was obliged, notwithſtanding the repeated perfidy of the man, to give him a conſiderable command in the army. A battle ſoon after enſued at Aſſington in Eſſex; where Edric, flying in the beginning of the day, occaſioned the total defeat of the Engliſh, followed by a great ſlaughter of the nobility. The indefatigable Edmond, however, had ſtill reſources: Aſſembling a new army at Gloceſter, he was again in a condition to diſpute the field; when the Daniſh and Engliſh nobility, equally haraſſed with

thoſe convulſions, obliged their kings to come to a compromiſe, and to divide the kingdom between them by treaty. Canute reſerved to himſelf the northern diviſion, conſiſting of Mercia, Eaſt-Anglia, and Northumberland, which he had entirely ſubdued: The ſouthern parts were left to Edmond. This prince ſurvived the treaty about a month: He was murdered at Oxford by two of his chamberlains, accomplices of Edric, who thereby made way for the ſucceſſion of Canute, the Dane, to the crown of England.

CANUTE.

(1017.) THE Engliſh, who had been unable to defend their country, and maintain their independency, under ſo active and brave a prince as Edmond, could, after his death, expect nothing but total ſubjection from Canute, who, active and brave himſelf, and at the head of a great force, was ready to take advantage of the minority of Edwin and Edward, the two ſons of Edmond. Yet this conqueror, who was commonly ſo little ſcrupulous, ſhowed himſelf anxious to cover his injuſtice under plauſible pretences: Before he ſeized the dominions of the Engliſh princes, he ſummoned a general aſſembly of the ſtates, in order to fix the ſucceſſion of the kingdom. He here ſuborned ſome nobles to depoſe that, in the treaty of Gloceſter, it had been verbally agreed either to name Canute, in caſe of Edmond's death, ſucceſſor to his dominions, or tutor to his children (for hiſtorians vary in this particular): And that evidence, ſupported by the great power of Canute, determined the ſtates immediately to put the Daniſh monarch in poſſeſſion of the government. Canute, jealous of the two princes, but ſenſible that he ſhould render himſelf extremely odious if he ordered them to be diſpatched in England, ſent them abroad to his ally the king of Sweden, whom he deſired, as ſoon as they arrived at his court, to free him by their death from all farther anxiety. The Swediſh monarch was too generous to comply with the requeſt; but being afraid of drawing

drawing on himself a quarrel with Canute, by protecting the young princes, he sent them to Solomon king of Hungary, to be educated in his court. The elder, Edwin, was afterwards married to the sister of the king of Hungary; but the English prince dying without issue, Solomon gave his sister-in-law, Agatha, daughter of the emperor Henry II. in marriage to Edward the younger brother; and she bore him Edgar Atheling, Margaret, afterwards queen of Scotland, and Christina, who retired into a convent.

Canute, though he had reached the great point of his ambition, in obtaining possession of the English crown, was obliged at first to make great sacrifices to it; and to gratify the chief of the nobility, by bestowing on them the most extensive governments and jurisdictions. He created Thurkill earl or duke of East-Anglia (for these titles were then nearly of the same import), Yric of Northumberland, and Edric of Mercia; reserving only to himself the administration of Wessex. But seizing afterwards a favourable opportunity, he expelled Thurkill and Yric from their governments, and banished them the kingdom: He put to death many of the English nobility, on whose fidelity he could not rely, and whom he hated on account of their disloyalty to their native prince. And even the traitor Edric, having had the assurance to reproach him with his services, was condemned to be executed, and his body to be thrown into the Thames; a suitable reward for his multiplied acts of perfidy and rebellion.

Canute also found himself obliged, in the beginning of his reign, to load the people with heavy taxes, in order to reward his Danish followers: He exacted from them at one time the sum of 72,000 pounds; besides 11,000 pounds which he levied on London alone. He was probably willing, from political motives, to mulct severely that city, on account of the affection which it had borne to Edmond, and the resistance which it had made to the Danish power in two obstinate sieges *. But

* In one of those sieges, Canute diverted the course of the

But theſe rigours were imputed to neceſſity; and Canute, like a wiſe prince, was determined that the Engliſh, now deprived of all their dangerous leaders, ſhould be reconciled to the Daniſh yoke, by the juſtice and impartiality of his adminiſtration. He ſent back to Denmark as many of his followers as he could ſafely ſpare: He reſtored the Saxon cuſtoms in a general aſſembly of the ſtates: He made no diſtinction between Danes and Engliſh in the diſtribution of juſtice: And he took care, by a ſtrict execution of law, to protect the lives and properties of all his people. The Danes were gradually incorporated with his new ſubjects; and both were glad to obtain a little reſpite from thoſe multiplied calamities from which the one, no leſs than the other, had, in their fierce conteſt for power, experienced ſuch fatal conſequences.

The removal of Edmond's children into ſo diſtant a country as Hungary, was, next to their death, regarded by Canute as the greateſt ſecurity to his government: He had no farther anxiety, except with regard to Alfred and Edward, who were protected and ſupported by their uncle, Richard duke of Normandy. Richard even fitted out a great armament, in order to reſtore the Engliſh princes to the throne of their anceſtors; and though the navy was diſperſed by a ſtorm, Canute ſaw the danger to which he was expoſed from the enmity of ſo warlike a people as the Normans. In order to acquire the friendſhip of the duke, he paid his addreſſes to queen Emma, ſiſter of that prince; and promiſed that he would leave the children, whom he ſhould have by that marriage, in poſſeſſion of the crown of England. Richard complied with his demand, and ſent over Emma to England, where ſhe was ſoon after married to Canute. The Engliſh, though they diſapproved of her eſpouſing the mortal enemy of her former huſband and his family, were pleaſed to find at court a ſovereign, to whom they were accuſtomed, and who had already formed connec-

Thames, and by that means brought his ſhips above London bridge.

tions

tions with them: And thus Canute, beſides ſecuring by this marriage the alliance of Normandy, gradually acquired, by the ſame means, the confidence of his own ſubjects. The Norman prince did not long ſurvive the marriage of Emma; and he left the inheritance of the dutchy to his eldeſt ſon of the ſame name; who dying a year after him without children, was ſucceeded by his brother Robert, a man of valour and abilities.

Canute, having ſettled his power in England beyond all danger of a revolution, made a voyage to Denmark, in order to reſiſt the attacks of the king of Sweden; and he carried along with him a great body of the Engliſh, under the command of earl Godwin. This nobleman had here an opportunity of performing a ſervice, by which he both reconciled the king's mind to the Engliſh nation, and, gaining to himſelf the friendſhip of his ſovereign, laid the foundation of that immenſe fortune which he acquired to his family. He was ſtationed next the Swediſh camp; and obſerving a favourable opportunity, which he was obliged ſuddenly to ſeize, he attacked the enemy in the night, drove them from their trenches, threw them into diſorder, purſued his advantage, and obtained a deciſive victory over them. Next morning Canute, ſeeing the Engliſh camp entirely abandoned, imagined that thoſe diſaffected troops had deſerted to the enemy: He was agreeably ſurpriſed to find that they were at that time engaged in purſuit of the diſcomfited Swedes. He was ſo pleaſed with his ſucceſs, and with the manner of obtaining it, that he beſtowed his daughter in marriage upon Godwin, and treated him ever after with entire confidence and regard.

In another voyage, which he made afterwards (1028) to Denmark, Canute attacked Norway, and expelling the juſt but unwarlike Olaus, kept poſſeſſion of his kingdom till the death of that prince. He had now, by his conqueſts and valour, attained the utmoſt height of grandeur: Having leiſure from wars and intrigues, he felt the unſatisfactory nature of all human enjoyments; and, equally weary of the glories and turmoils of this

life, he began to caſt his view towards that future exiſtence which it is ſo natural for the human mind, whether ſatiated by proſperity, or diſguſted with adverſity, to make the object of its attention. Unfortunately, the ſpirit which prevailed in that age gave a wrong direction to his devotion: Inſtead of making compenſation to thoſe whom he had injured by his former acts of violence, he employed himſelf entirely in thoſe exerciſes of piety which the monks repreſented as the moſt meritorious. He built churches, he endowed monaſteries, he enriched the eccleſiaſtics, and he beſtowed revenues for the ſupport of chantries at Aſſington and other places; where he appointed prayers to be ſaid for the ſouls of thoſe who had there fallen in battle againſt him. He even undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, where he reſided a conſiderable time: Beſides obtaining from the pope ſome privileges for the Engliſh ſchool erected there, he engaged all the princes, through whoſe dominions he was obliged to paſs, to deſiſt from thoſe heavy impoſitions and tolls which they were accuſtomed to exact from the Engliſh pilgrims. By this ſpirit of devotion, no leſs than by his equitable and politic adminiſtration, he gained, in a good meaſure, the affections of his ſubjects.

Canute, the greateſt and moſt powerful monarch of his time, ſovereign of Denwark and Norway, as well as of England, could not fail of meeting with adulation from his courtiers; a tribute which is liberally paid even to the meaneſt and weakeſt princes. Some of his flatterers breaking out one day in admiration of his grandeur, exclaimed that every thing was poſſible for him: Upon which the monarch, it is ſaid, ordered his chair to be ſet on the ſea-ſhore, while the tide was riſing; and as the waters approached, he commanded them to retire, and to obey the voice of him who was lord of the ocean. He feigned to ſit ſome time in expectation of their ſubmiſſion; but when the ſea ſtill advanced towards him, and began to waſh him with its billows, he turned to his courtiers, and remarked to them, that every creature in the univerſe was feeble and impotent,

and

and that power reſided with one Being alone, in whoſe hands were all the elements of nature; who could ſay to the ocean, *Thus far ſhalt thou go, and no farther*; and who could level with his nod the moſt towering piles of human pride and ambition.

(1031.) The only memorable action which Canute performed after his return from Rome, was an expedition againſt Malcolm king of Scotland. During the reign of Ethelred, a tax of a ſhilling a hyde had been impoſed on all the lands of England. It was commonly called *Danegelt*; becauſe the revenue had been employed, either in buying peace with the Danes, or in making preparations againſt the inroads of that hoſtile nation. That monarch had required that the ſame tax ſhould be paid by Cumberland, which was held by the Scots; but Malcolm, a warlike prince, told him, that as he was always able to repulſe the Danes by his own power, he would neither ſubmit to buy peace of his enemies, nor pay others for reſiſting them. Ethelred, offended at this reply, which contained a ſecret reproach on his own conduct, undertook an expedition againſt Cumberland; but though he committed ravages upon the country, he could never bring Malcolm to a temper more humble or ſubmiſſive. Canute, after his acceſſion, ſummoned the Scottiſh king to acknowledge himſelf a vaſſal for Cumberland to the crown of England; but Malcolm refuſed compliance, on pretence that he owed homage to thoſe princes only who inherited that kingdom by right of blood. Canute was not of a temper to bear this inſult; and the king of Scotland ſoon found that the ſceptre was in very different hands from thoſe of the feeble and irreſolute Ethelred. Upon Canute's appearing on the frontiers with a formidable army, Malcolm agreed that his grandſon and heir, Duncan, whom he put in poſſeſſion of Cumberland, ſhould make the ſubmiſſions required, and that the heirs of Scotland ſhould always acknowledge themſelves vaſſals to England for that province.

Canute paſſed four years in peace after this enterpriſe, and he died at Shaftſbury, leaving three ſons, Sweyn, Harold,

Harold, and Hardicanute. Sweyn, whom he had by his firſt marriage with Alfwen, daughter of the earl of Hampſhire, was crowned in Norway: Hardicanute, whom Emma had borne him, was in poſſeſſion of Denmark: Harold, who was of the ſame marriage with Sweyn, was at that time in England.

HAROLD HAREFOOT.

(1035.) THOUGH Canute, in his treaty with Richard duke of Normandy, had ſtipulated that his children by Emma ſhould ſucceed to the crown of England, he had either conſidered himſelf as releaſed from that engagement by the death of Richard, or eſteemed it dangerous to leave an unſettled and newly-conquered kingdom in the hands of ſo young a prince as Hardicanute: He therefore appointed, by his will, Harold ſucceſſor to the crown. This prince was beſides preſent to maintain his claim; he was favoured by all the Danes; and he got immediately poſſeſſion of his father's treaſures, which might be equally uſeful, whether he found it neceſſary to proceed by force or intrigue in inſuring his ſucceſſion. On the other hand, Hardicanute had the ſuffrages of the Engliſh, who, on account of his being born among them of queen Emma, regarded him as their countryman; he was favoured by the articles of treaty with the duke of Normandy; and above all, his party was eſpouſed by earl Godwin, the moſt powerful nobleman in the kingdom, eſpecially in the province of Weſſex, the chief ſeat of the ancient Engliſh. Affairs were likely to terminate in a civil war; when, by the interpoſition of the nobility of both parties, a compromiſe was made; and it was agreed that Harold ſhould enjoy, together with London, all the provinces north of the Thames, while the poſſeſſion of the ſouth ſhould remain to Hardicanute; and till that prince ſhould appear and take poſſeſſion of his dominions, Emma fixed her reſidence at Wincheſter, and eſtabliſhed her authority over her ſon's ſhare of the partition.

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Meanwhile Robert duke of Normandy died in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and being ſucceeded by a ſon, yet a minor, the two Engliſh princes, Alfred and Edward, who found no longer any countenance or protection in that country, gladly embraced the opportunity of paying a viſit, with a numerous retinue, to their mother Emma, who ſeemed to be placed in a ſtate of ſo much power and ſplendour at Wincheſter. But the face of affairs ſoon wore a melancholy aſpect. Earl Godwin had been gained by the arts of Harold, who promiſed to eſpouſe the daughter of that nobleman; and while the treaty was yet a ſecret, theſe two tyrants laid a plan for the deſtruction of the Engliſh princes. Alfred was invited to London by Harold with many profeſſions of friendſhip; but when he had reached Guilford, he was ſet upon by Godwin's vaſſals, about ſix hundred of his train were murdered in the moſt cruel manner, he himſelf was taken priſoner, his eyes were put out, and he was conducted to the monaſtery of Ely, where he died ſoon after. Edward and Emma, appriſed of the fate which was awaiting them, fled beyond ſea, the former into Normandy, the latter into Flanders: While Harold, triumphing in his bloody policy, took poſſeſſion, without reſiſtance, of all the dominions aſſigned to his brother.

This is the only memorable action performed, during a reign of four years, by this prince, who gave ſo bad a ſpecimen of his character, and whoſe bodily accompliſhments alone are known to us by his appellation of *Harefoot*, which he acquired from his agility in running and walking. He died on the 14th of April 1039, little regretted or eſteemed by his ſubjects; and left the ſucceſſion open to his brother, Hardicanute.

HARDICANUTE.

(1039.) Hardicanute, or Canute the Hardy, that is, the robuſt (for he too is chiefly known by his bodily accompliſhments), though by remaining ſo long in Denmark,

mark, he had been deprived of his ſhare in the partition of the kingdom, had not abandoned his pretenſions; and he had determined, before Harold's death, to recover by arms, what he had loſt, either by his own negligence, or by the neceſſity of his affairs. On pretence of paying a viſit to the queen dowager in Flanders, he had aſſembled a fleet of ſixty ſail, and was preparing to make a deſcent on England, when intelligence of his brother's death induced him to ſail immediately to London, where he was received in triumph, and acknowledged king without oppoſition.

The firſt act of Hardicanute's government afforded his ſubjects a bad prognoſtic of his future conduct. He was ſo enraged at Harold, for depriving him of his ſhare of the kingdom, and for the cruel treatment of his brother Alfred, that, in an impotent deſire of revenge againſt the dead, he ordered his body to be dug up, and to be thrown into the Thames: And when it was found by ſome fiſhermen, and buried in London, he ordered it again to be dug up, and to be thrown again into the river: But it was fiſhed up a ſecond time, and then interred with great ſecreſy. Godwin, equally ſervile and inſolent, ſubmitted to be his inſtrument in that unnatural and brutal action.

That nobleman knew that he was univerſally believed to have been an accomplice in the barbarity exerciſed on Alfred, and that he was on that account obnoxious to Hardicanute; and perhaps he hoped, by diſplaying this rage againſt Harold's memory, to juſtify himſelf from having had any participation in his counſels. But prince Edward being invited over by the king, immediately on his appearance, preferred an accuſation againſt Godwin for the murder of Alfred, and demanded juſtice for that crime. Godwin, in order to appeaſe the king, made him a magnificent preſent of a galley with a gilt ſtern, rowed by fourſcore men, who wore each of them a gold bracelet on his arm, weighing ſixteen ounces, and were armed and clothed in the moſt ſumptuous manner. Hardicanute, pleaſed with the ſplendour of this ſpectacle, quickly

quickly forgot his brother's murder; and on Godwin's ſwearing that he was innocent of the crime, he allowed him to be acquitted.

Though Hardicanute, before his acceſſion, had been called over by the vows of the Engliſh, he ſoon loſt the affections of the nation by his miſconduct; but nothing appeared more grievous to them, than his renewing the impoſition of Danegelt, and obliging the nation to pay a great ſum of money to the fleet which brought him from Denmark. The diſcontents ran high in many places: In Worceſter the populace roſe, and put to death two of the collectors. The king, enraged at this oppoſition, ſwore vengeance againſt the city, and ordered three noblemen, Godwin duke of Weſſex, Siward duke of Northumberland, and Leofric duke of Mercia, to execute his menaces with the utmoſt rigour. They were obliged to ſet fire to the city, and deliver it up to be plundered by their ſoldiers; but they ſaved the lives of the inhabitants, whom they confined in a ſmall iſland of the Severne, called Beverey, till, by their interceſſion, they were able to appeaſe the king, and obtain the pardon of the ſupplicants.

This violent government was of ſhort duration. Hardicanute died in two years after his acceſſion, at the nuptials of a Daniſh lord, which he had honoured with his preſence. His uſual habits of intemperance were ſo well known, that, notwithſtanding his robuſt conſtitution, his ſudden death gave as little ſurpriſe as it did ſorrow to his ſubjects.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

(1041.) THE Engliſh, on the death of Hardicanute, ſaw a favourable opportunity for recovering their liberty, and for ſhaking off the Daniſh yoke, under which they had ſo long laboured. Sweyn king of Norway, the eldeſt ſon of Canute, was abſent; and as the two laſt kings had died without iſſue, none of that race preſented himſelf, nor any whom the Danes could ſupport as ſucceſſor to the throne. Prince Edward

Edward was fortunately at court on his brother's demiſe; and though the deſcendants of Edmond Ironſide were the true heirs of the Saxon family, yet their abſence in ſo remote a country as Hungary, appeared a ſufficient reaſon for their excluſion to a people like the Engliſh, ſo little accuſtomed to obſerve a regular order in the ſucceſſion of their monarchs. All delays might be dangerous; and the preſent occaſion muſt haſtily be embraced; while the Danes, without concert, without a leader, aſtoniſhed at the preſent incident, and anxious only for their perſonal ſafety, durſt not oppoſe the united voice of the nation.

But this concurrence of circumſtances in favour of Edward, might have failed of its effect, had his ſucceſſion been oppoſed by Godwin, whoſe power, alliances, and abilities, gave him a great influence at all times, eſpecially amidſt thoſe ſudden opportunities which always attended a revolution of government, and which, either ſeized or neglected, commonly prove deciſive. There were oppoſite reaſons which divided men's hopes and fears with regard to Godwin's conduct. On the one hand, the credit of that nobleman lay chiefly in Weſſex, which was almoſt entirely inhabited by Engliſh: It was therefore preſumed, that he would ſecond the wiſhes of that people in reſtoring the Saxon line, and in humbling the Danes, from whom he, as well as they, had reaſon to dread, as they had already felt, the moſt grievous oppreſſions. On the other hand, there ſubſiſted a declared animoſity between Edward and Godwin, on account of Alfred's murder, of which the latter had publicly been accuſed by the prince, and which he might believe ſo deep an offence as could never, on account of any ſubſequent merits, be ſincerely pardoned. But their common friends here interpoſed; and repreſenting the neceſſity of their good correſpondence, obliged them to lay aſide all jealouſy and rancour, and concur in reſtoring liberty to their native country. Godwin only ſtipulated that Edward, as a pledge of his ſincere reconciliation, ſhould promiſe to marry his daughter Editha; and having fortified himſelf by this alliance,

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he ſummoned a general council at Gillingham, and prepared every meaſure for ſecuring the ſucceſſion to Edward. The Engliſh were unanimous and zealous in their reſolutions; the Danes were divided and diſpirited: Any ſmall oppoſition which appeared in this aſſembly was brow-beaten and ſuppreſſed; and Edward was crowned king, with every demonſtration of duty and affection.

The triumph of the Engliſh, upon this ſignal and deciſive advantage, was at firſt attended with ſome inſult and violence againſt the Danes; but the king, by the mildneſs of his character, ſoon reconciled the latter to his adminiſtration, and the diſtinction between the two nations gradually diſappeared. The Danes were interſperſed with the Engliſh in moſt of the provinces; they ſpoke nearly the ſame language; they differed little in their manners and laws; domeſtic diſſenſions in Denmark prevented, for ſome years, any powerful invaſion from thence, which might awaken paſt animoſities; and as the Norman conqueſt, which enſued ſoon after, reduced both nations to equal ſubjection, there is no farther mention in hiſtory of any difference between them. The joy, however, of their preſent deliverance made ſuch impreſſion on the minds of the Engliſh, that they inſtituted an annual feſtival for celebrating that great event; and it was obſerved in ſome countries even to the time of Spellman.

The popularity which Edward enjoyed on his acceſſion, was not deſtroyed by the firſt act of his adminiſtration, his reſuming all the grants of his immediate predeceſſors; an attempt which is commonly attended with the moſt dangerous conſequences. The poverty of the crown convinced the nation that this act of violence was become abſolutely neceſſary; and as the loſs fell chiefly on the Danes, who had obtained large grants from the late kings, their countrymen, on account of their ſervices in ſubduing the kingdom, the Engliſh were rather pleaſed to ſee them reduced to their primitive poverty. The king's ſeverity alſo towards his mother, the queen-dowager, though expoſed to ſome more cenſure, met not

with very general diſapprobation. He had hitherto lived on indifferent terms with that princeſs: He accuſed her of neglecting him and his brother during their adverſe fortune: He remarked, that as the ſuperior qualities of Canute, and his better treatment of her, had made her entirely indifferent to the memory of Ethelred, ſhe alſo gave the preference to her children of the ſecond bed, and always regarded Hardicanute as her favourite. The ſame reaſons had probably made her unpopular in England; and though her benefactions to the monks obtained her the favour of that order, the nation was not, in general, diſpleaſed to ſee her ſtripped by Edward of immenſe treaſures which ſhe had amaſſed. He confined her, during the remainder of her life, in a monaſtery at Wincheſter; but carried his rigour againſt her no farther. The ſtories of his accuſing her of a participation in her ſon Alfred's murder, and of a criminal correſpondence with the biſhop of Wincheſter, and alſo of her juſtifying herſelf by treading bare-foot, without receiving any hurt, over nine burning plough-ſhares, were the inventions of the monkiſh hiſtorians, and were propagated and believed from the ſilly wonder of poſterity.

The Engliſh flattered themſelves that, by the acceſſion of Edward, they were delivered for ever from the dominion of foreigners; but they ſoon found that this evil was not yet entirely removed. The king had been educated in Normandy; and had contracted many intimacies with the natives of that country, as well as an affection for their manners. The court of England was ſoon filled with Normans, who, being diſtinguiſhed both by the favour of Edward, and by a degree of cultivation ſuperior to that which was attained by the Engliſh in thoſe ages, ſoon rendered their language, cuſtoms, and laws, faſhionable in the kingdom. The ſtudy of the French tongue became general among the people. The courtiers affected to imitate that nation in their dreſs, equipage, and entertainments: Even the lawyers employed a foreign language in their deeds and papers: But above all, the church felt the influence and dominion of thoſe ſtrangers:

ſtrangers: Ulf and William, two Normans, who had formerly been the king's chaplains, were created biſhops of Dorcheſter and London. Robert, a Norman alſo, was promoted to the ſee of Canterbury, and always enjoyed the higheſt favour of his maſter, of which his abilities rendered him not unworthy. And though the king's prudence, or his want of authority, made him confer almoſt all the civil and military employments on the natives, the eccleſiaſtical preferments fell often to the ſhare of the Normans; and as the latter poſſeſſed Edward's confidence, they had ſecretly a great influence on public affairs, and excited the jealouſy of the Engliſh, particularly of earl Godwin.

This powerful nobleman, beſides being duke or earl of Weſſex, had the counties of Kent and Suſſex annexed to his government. His eldeſt ſon, Sweyn, poſſeſſed the ſame authority in the counties of Oxford, Berks, Gloceſter, and Hereford: And Harold, his ſecond ſon, was duke of Eaſt-Anglia, and at the ſame time governor of Eſſex. The great authority of this family was ſupported by immenſe poſſeſſions and powerful alliances; and the abilities, as well as ambition, of Godwin himſelf, contributed to render it ſtill more dangerous. A prince of greater capacity and vigour than Edward, would have found it difficult to ſupport the dignity of the crown under ſuch circumſtances; and as the haughty temper of Godwin made him often forget the reſpect due to his prince, Edward's animoſity againſt him was grounded on perſonal as well as political conſiderations, on recent as well as more ancient injuries. The king, in purſuance of his engagements, had indeed married Editha, the daughter of Godwin; but this alliance became a freſh ſource of enmity between them. Edward's hatred of the father was transferred to that princeſs; and Editha, though poſſeſſed of many amiable accompliſhments, could never acquire the confidence and affection of her huſband. It is even pretended that, during the whole courſe of her life, he abſtained from all commerce of love with her; and ſuch was the abſurd admiration paid to an inviolable

chaſtity during thoſe ages (1048), that his conduct in this particular is highly celebrated by the monkiſh hiſtorians, and greatly contributed to his acquiring the title of ſaint and confeſſor.

The moſt popular pretence on which Godwin could ground his diſaffection to the king and his adminiſtration, was to complain of the influence of the Normans in the government; and a declared oppoſition had thence ariſen between him and theſe favourites. It was not long before this animoſity broke into action. Euſtace count of Bologne having paid a viſit to the king, paſſed by Dover in his return: One of his train, being refuſed entrance to a lodging which had been aſſigned him, attempted to make his way by force, and in the conteſt he wounded the maſter of the houſe. The inhabitants revenged this inſult by the death of the ſtranger; the count and his train took arms, and murdered the wounded townſman; a tumult enſued; near twenty perſons were killed on each ſide; and Euſtace, being overpowered by numbers, was obliged to ſave his life by flight from the fury of the populace. He hurried immediately to court, and complained of the uſage he had met with: The king entered zealouſly into the quarrel, and was highly diſpleaſed that a ſtranger of ſuch diſtinction, whom he had invited over to his court, ſhould, without any juſt cauſe, as he believed, have felt ſo ſenſibly the inſolence and animoſity of his people. He gave orders to Godwin, in whoſe government Dover lay, to repair immediately to the place, and to puniſh the inhabitants for the crime: But Godwin, who deſired rather to encourage than repreſs the popular diſcontents againſt foreigners, refuſed obedience, and endeavoured to throw the whole blame of the riot on the count of Bologne, and his retinue. Edward, touched in ſo ſenſible a point, ſaw the neceſſity of exerting the royal authority; and he threatened Godwin, if he perſiſted in his diſobedience, to make him feel the utmoſt effects of his reſentment.

The earl, perceiving a rupture to be unavoidable, and pleaſed to embark in a cauſe where it was likely he ſhould

ſhould be ſupported by his countrymen, made preparations for his own defence, or rather for an attack on Edward. Under pretence of repreſſing ſome diſorders on the Welſh frontier, he ſecretly aſſembled a great army, and was approaching the king, who reſided, without any military force, and without ſuſpicion, at Gloceſter. Edward applied for protection to Siward duke of Northumberland, and Leofric duke of Mercia, two powerful noblemen, whoſe jealouſy of Godwin's greatneſs, as well as their duty to the crown, engaged them to defend the king in this extremity. They haſtened to him with ſuch of their followers as they could aſſemble on a ſudden; and finding the danger much greater than they had at firſt apprehended, they iſſued orders for muſtering all their forces within their reſpective governments, and for marching them without delay to the defence of the king's perſon and authority. Edward, meanwhile, endeavoured to gain time by negotiation; while Godwin, who thought the king entirely in his power, and who was willing to ſave appearances, fell into the ſnare; and not ſenſible that he ought to have no farther reſerve after he had proceeded ſo far, he loſt the favourable opportunity of rendering himſelf maſter of the government.

The Engliſh, though they had no high idea of Edward's vigour and capacity, bore him great affection on account of his humanity, juſtice, and piety, as well as the long race of their native kings from whom he was deſcended; and they haſtened from all quarters to defend him from the preſent danger. His army was now ſo conſiderable, that he ventured to take the field; and marching to London, he ſummoned a great council to judge of the rebellion of Godwin and his ſons. Theſe noblemen pretended at firſt that they were willing to ſtand their trial; but having in vain endeavoured to make their adherents perſiſt in rebellion, they offered to come to London, provided they might receive hoſtages for their ſafety: This propoſal being rejected, they were obliged to diſband the remains of their forces, and have recourſe to flight. Baldwin earl of Flanders gave protection

to Godwin and his three ſons, Gurth, Sweyn, and Toſti; the latter of whom had married the daughter of that prince; Harold and Leofwin, two other of his ſons, took ſhelter in Ireland. The eſtates of the father and ſons were confiſcated: Their governments were given to others: Queen Editha was confined in a monaſtery at Warewel: And the greatneſs of this family, once ſo formidable, ſeemed now to be totally ſupplanted and overthrown.

But Godwin had fixed his authority on too firm a baſis, and he was too ſtrongly ſupported by alliances, both foreign and domeſtic, not to occaſion farther diſturbances, and make new efforts for his re-eſtabliſhment. The earl of Flanders (1052) permitted him to purchaſe and hire ſhips within his harbours; and Godwin, having manned them with his followers, and with freebooters of all nations, put to ſea, and attempted to make a deſcent at Sandwich. The king, informed of his preparations, had equipped a conſiderable fleet, much ſuperior to that of the enemy; and the earl haſtily, before their appearance, made his retreat into the Flemiſh harbours. The Engliſh court, allured by the preſent ſecurity, and deſtitute of all vigorous counſels, allowed the ſeamen to diſband, and the fleet to go to decay; while Godwin, expecting this event, kept his men in readineſs for action. He put to ſea immediately, and ſailed to the Iſle of Wight, where he was joined by Harold, with a ſquadron which that nobleman had collected in Ireland. He was now maſter of the ſea; and entering every harbour in the ſouthern coaſt, he ſeized all the ſhips, and ſummoned his followers in thoſe counties, which had ſo long been ſubject to his government, to aſſiſt him in procuring juſtice to himſelf, his family, and his country, againſt the tyranny of foreigners. Reinforced by great numbers from all quarters, he entered the Thames; and appearing before London, threw every thing into confuſion. The king alone ſeemed reſolute to defend himſelf to the laſt extremity; but the interpoſition of the Engliſh nobility, many of whom favoured Godwin's pretenſions, made

Edward

Edward hearken to terms of accommodation; and the feigned humility of the earl, who diſclaimed all intentions of offering violence to his ſovereign, and deſired only to juſtify himſelf by a fair and open trial, paved the way for his more eaſy admiſſion. It was ſtipulated, that he ſhould give hoſtages for his good behaviour, and that the primate and all the foreigners ſhould be baniſhed: By this treaty, the preſent danger of a civil war was obviated, but the authority of the crown was conſiderably impaired, or rather entirely annihilated. Edward, ſenſible that he had not power ſufficient to ſecure Godwin's hoſtages in England, ſent them over to his kinſman, the young duke of Normandy.

Godwin's death, which happened ſoon after, while he was ſitting at table with the king, prevented him from farther eſtabliſhing the authority which he had acquired, and from reducing Edward to ſtill greater ſubjection *. He was ſucceeded in the government of Weſſex, Suſſex, Kent, and Eſſex, and in the office of ſteward of the houſehold, a place of great power, by his ſon Harold, who was actuated by an ambition equal to that of his father, and was ſuperior to him in addreſs, in inſinuation, and in virtue. By a modeſt and gentle demeanour, he acquired the good-will of Edward; at leaſt ſoftened that hatred which the prince had ſo long borne his family; and gaining every day new partiſans by his bounty and affability, he proceeded in a more ſilent, and therefore a more dangerous manner, to the increaſe of his authority. The king, who had not ſufficient vigour directly to oppoſe his progreſs, knew of no other expedient than that hazardous one, of raiſing him a rival in the family of Lectric duke of Mercia, whoſe ſon Algar was inveſted with the government of Eaſt-Anglia, which, before the baniſhment of Harold, had belonged to the latter nobleman. But this policy, of balancing oppoſite parties, required a more ſteady hand to manage it than that of Edward, and naturally produced faction, and even civil broils, among nobles of ſuch mighty and in-

* See note [E] at the end of the volume.

dependent

dependent authority. Algar was ſoon after expelled his government by the intrigues and power of Harold; but being protected by Griffith prince of Wales, who had married his daughter, as well as by the power of his father Leofric, he obliged Harold to ſubmit to an accommodation, and was reinſtated in the government of Eaſt-Anglia. This peace was not of long duration: Harold, taking advantage of Leofric's death, which happened ſoon after, expelled Algar anew, and baniſhed him the kingdom: And though that nobleman made a freſh irruption into Eaſt-Anglia with an army of Norwegians, and over-ran the country, his death ſoon freed Harold from the pretenſions of ſo dangerous a rival. Edward, the eldeſt ſon of Algar, was indeed advanced to the government of Mercia; but the balance, which the king deſired to eſtabliſh between thoſe potent families, was wholly loſt, and the influence of Harold greatly preponderated.

(1055.) The death of Siward duke of Northumberland, made the way ſtill more open to the ambition of that nobleman. Siward, beſides his other merits, had acquired honour to England, by his ſucceſsful conduct in the only foreign enterpriſe undertaken during the reign of Edward. Duncan, king of Scotland, was a prince of a gentle diſpoſition, but poſſeſſed not the genius requiſite for governing a country ſo turbulent, and ſo much infeſted by the intrigues and animoſities of the great. Macbeth, a powerful nobleman, and nearly allied to the crown, not content with curbing the king's authority, carried ſtill farther his peſtilent ambition: He put his ſovereign to death; chaſed Malcolm Kenmore, his ſon and heir, into England; and uſurped the crown. Siward, whoſe daughter was married to Duncan, embraced, by Edward's orders, the protection of this diſtreſſed family: He marched an army into Scotland; and having defeated and killed Macbeth in battle, he reſtored Malcolm to the throne of his anceſtors. This ſervice, added to his former connections with the royal family of Scotland, brought a great acceſſion to the authority of Siward in the north; but as he had loſt his eldeſt

eldeſt ſon, Oſberne, in the action with Macbeth, it proved in the iſſue fatal to his family. His ſecond ſon, Walthoef, appeared, on his father's death, too young to be entruſted with the government of Northumberland; and Harold's influence obtained that dukedom for his own brother Toſti.

There are two circumſtances related of Siward, which diſcover his high ſenſe of honour, and his martial diſpoſition. When intelligence was brought him of his ſon Oſberne's death, he was inconſolable; till he heard that the wound was received in the breaſt, and that he had behaved with great gallantry in the action. When he found his own death approaching, he ordered his ſervants to clothe him in a complete ſuit of armour; and ſitting erect on the couch, with a ſpear in his hand, declared, that in that poſture, the only one worthy of a warrior, he would patiently await the fatal moment.

The king, now worn out with cares and infirmities, felt himſelf far advanced in the decline of life; and having no iſſue himſelf, began to think of appointing a ſucceſſor to the kingdom. He ſent a deputation to Hungary, to invite over his nephew, Edward, ſon of his elder brother, and the only remaining heir of the Saxon line. That prince, whoſe ſucceſſion to the crown would have been eaſy and undiſputed, came to England with his children, Edgar, ſurnamed Atheling, Margaret, and Chriſtina; but his death, which happened a few days after his arrival, threw the king into new difficulties. He ſaw, that the great power and ambition of Harold had tempted him to think of obtaining poſſeſſion of the throne on the firſt vacancy, and that Edgar, on account of his youth and inexperience, was very unfit to oppoſe the pretenſions of ſo popular and enterpriſing a rival. The animoſity which he had long borne to earl Godwin, made him averſe to the ſucceſſion of his ſon; and he could not, without extreme reluctance, think of an increaſe of grandeur to a family which had riſen on the ruins of royal authority, and which, by the murder of Alfred, his brother, had contributed ſo much to the weakening of the Saxon line. In this uncertainty, he

ſecretly

ſecretly caſt his eye towards his kinſman, William duke of Normandy, as the only perſon whoſe power, and reputation, and capacity, could ſupport any deſtination which he might make in his favour, to the excluſion of Harold and his family.

This famous prince was natural ſon of Robert duke of Normandy, by Harlotta, daughter of a tanner in Falaiſe, and was very early eſtabliſhed in that grandeur from which his birth ſeemed to have ſet him at ſo great a diſtance. While he was but nine years of age, his father had reſolved to undertake a pilgrimage to Jeruſalem; a faſhionable act of devotion, which had taken place of the pilgrimages to Rome, and which, as it was attended with more difficulty and danger, and carried thoſe religious adventurers to the firſt ſources of Chriſtianity, appeared to them more meritorious. Before his departure, he aſſembled the ſtates of the dutchy; and informing them of his deſign, he engaged them to ſwear allegiance to his natural ſon, William, whom, as he had no legitimate iſſue, he intended, in caſe he ſhould die in the pilgrimage, to leave ſucceſſor to his dominions. As he was a prudent prince, he could not but foreſee the great inconveniencies which muſt attend this journey, and this ſettlement of his ſucceſſion; ariſing from the perpetual turbulency of the great, the claims of other branches of the ducal family, and the power of the French monarch: But all theſe conſiderations were ſurmounted by the prevailing zeal for pilgrimages; and, probably, the more important they were, the more would Robert exult in ſacrificing them to what he imagined to be his religious duty.

This prince, as he had apprehended, died in his pilgrimage; and the minority of his ſon was attended with all thoſe diſorders which were almoſt unavoidable in that ſituation. The licentious nobles, freed from the awe of ſovereign authority, broke out into perſonal animoſities againſt each other, and made the whole country a ſcene of war and devaſtation. Roger count of Toni, and Alain count of Britanny, advanced claims to the dominion of the ſtate; and Henry I. king

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of France, thought the opportunity favourable for reducing the power of a vaſſal, who had originally acquired his ſettlement in ſo violent and invidious a manner, and who had long appeared formidable to his ſovereign. The regency eſtabliſhed by Robert encountered great difficulties in ſupporting the government under this complication of dangers; and the young prince, when he came to maturity, found himſelf reduced to a very low condition. But the great qualities which he ſoon diſplayed in the field and in the cabinet, gave encouragement to his friends, and ſtruck a terror into his enemies. He oppoſed himſelf on all ſides againſt his rebellious ſubjects, and againſt foreign invaders; and by his valour and conduct prevailed in every action. He obliged the French king to grant him peace on reaſonable terms; he expelled all pretenders to the ſovereignty; and he reduced his turbulent barons to pay ſubmiſſion to his authority, and to ſuſpend their mutual animoſities. The natural ſeverity of his temper appeared in a rigorous adminiſtration of juſtice; and having found the happy effects of this plan of government, without which the laws in thoſe ages became totally impotent, he regarded it as a fixed maxim, that an inflexible conduct was the firſt duty of a ſovereign.

The tranquillity which he had eſtabliſhed in his dominions, had given William leiſure to pay a viſit to the king of England during the time of Godwin's baniſhment; and he was received in a manner ſuitable to the great reputation which he had acquired, to the relation by which he was connected with Edward, and to the obligations which that prince owed to his family. On the return of Godwin, and the expulſion of the Norman favourites, Robert archbiſhop of Canterbury had, before his departure, perſuaded Edward to think of adopting William as his ſucceſſor; a counſel which was favoured by the king's averſion to Godwin, his prepoſſeſſions for the Normans, and his eſteem of the duke. That prelate, therefore, received a commiſſion to inform William of the king's intentions in his favour; and he was the firſt perſon that opened the mind

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of the prince to entertain thoſe ambitious hopes. But Edward, irreſolute and feeble in his purpoſe, finding that the Engliſh would more eaſily acquieſce in the reſtoration of the Saxon line, had, in the mean time, invited his brother's deſcendants from Hungary, with a view of having them recogniſed heirs to the crown. The death of his nephew, and the inexperience and unpromiſing qualities of young Edgar, made him reſume his former intentions in favour of the duke of Normandy; though his averſion to hazardous enterpriſes engaged him to poſtpone the execution, and even to keep his purpoſe ſecret from all his miniſters.

Harold, meanwhile, proceeded after a more open manner, in increaſing his popularity, in eſtabliſhing his power, and in preparing the way for his advancement on the firſt vacancy; an event which, from the age and infirmities of the king, appeared not very diſtant. But there was ſtill an obſtacle, which it was requiſite for him previouſly to overcome. Earl Godwin, when reſtored to his power and fortune, had given hoſtages for his good behaviour; and among the reſt, one ſon and one grandſon, whom Edward, for greater ſecurity, as has been related, had conſigned to the cuſtody of the duke of Normandy. Harold, though not aware of the duke's being his competitor, was uneaſy that ſuch near relations ſhould be detained priſoners in a foreign country; and he was afraid leſt William ſhould, in favour of Edgar, retain theſe pledges as a check on the ambition of any other pretender. He repreſented, therefore, to the king, his unfeigned ſubmiſſion to royal authority, his ſteady duty to his prince, and the little neceſſity there was, after ſuch a uniform trial of his obedience, to detain any longer thoſe hoſtages who had been required on the firſt compoſing of civil diſcords. By theſe topics, enforced by his great power, he extorted the king's conſent to releaſe them; and in order to effect his purpoſe, he immediately proceeded, with a numerous retinue, on his journey to Normandy. A tempeſt drove him on the territory of Guy count of Ponthieu, who, being informed of his quality, immediately detained him priſoner,

priſoner, and demanded an exorbitant ſum for his ranſom. Harold found means to convey intelligence of his ſituation to the duke of Normandy; and repreſented, that while he was proceeding to *his* court, in execution of a commiſſion from the king of England, he had met with this harſh treatment from the mercenary diſpoſition of the count of Ponthieu.

William was immediately ſenſible of the importance of the incident. He foreſaw that, if he could once gain Harold, either by favours or menaces, his way to the throne of England would be open, and Edward would meet with no farther obſtacle in executing the favourable intentions which he had entertained in his behalf. He ſent, therefore, a meſſenger to Guy, in order to demand the liberty of his priſoner; and that nobleman, not daring to refuſe ſo great a prince, put Harold into the hands of the Norman, who conducted him to Roüen. William received him with every demonſtration of reſpect and friendſhip; and after ſhowing himſelf diſpoſed to comply with his deſire, in delivering up the hoſtages, he took an opportunity of diſcloſing to him the great ſecret of his pretenſions to the crown of England, and of the will which Edward intended to make in his favour. He deſired the aſſiſtance of Harold in perfecting that deſign; he made profeſſions of the utmoſt gratitude in return for ſo great an obligation; he promiſed that the preſent grandeur of Harold's family, which ſupported itſelf with difficulty under the jealouſy and hatred of Edward, ſhould receive new increaſe from a ſucceſſor who would be ſo greatly beholden to him for his advancement. Harold was ſurpriſed at this declaration of the duke; but being ſenſible that he ſhould never recover his own liberty, much leſs that of his brother and nephew, if he refuſed the demand, he feigned a compliance with William, renounced all hopes of the crown for himſelf, and profeſſed his ſincere intention of ſupporting the will of Edward, and ſeconding the pretenſions of the duke of Normandy. William, to bind him faſter to his intereſts, beſides offering him one of his daughters in marriage, required him to take an oath

that he would fulfil his promiſes; and in order to render the oath more obligatory, he employed an artifice well ſuited to the ignorance and ſuperſtition of the age. He ſecretly conveyed under the altar, on which Harold agreed to ſwear, the reliques of ſome of the moſt revered martyrs; and when Harold had taken the oath, he ſhowed him the reliques, and admoniſhed him to obſerve religiouſly an engagement which had been ratified by ſo tremendous a ſanction. The Engliſh nobleman was aſtoniſhed; but diſſembling his concern, he renewed the ſame profeſſions, and was diſmiſſed with all the marks of mutual confidence by the duke of Normandy.

When Harold found himſelf at liberty, his ambition ſuggeſted caſuiſtry ſufficient to juſtify to him the violation of an oath, which had been extorted from him by fear, and which, if fulfilled, might be attended with the ſubjection of his native country to a foreign power. He continued ſtill to practiſe every art of popularity; to increaſe the number of his partiſans; to reconcile the minds of the Engliſh to the idea of his ſucceſſion; to revive their hatred of the Normans; and by an oſtentation of his power and influence to deter the timorous Edward from executing his intended deſtination in favour of William. Fortune, about this time, threw two incidents in his way, by which he was enabled to acquire general favour, and to increaſe the character which he had already attained, of virtue and abilities.

The Welſh, though a leſs formidable enemy than the Danes, had long been accuſtomed to infeſt the weſtern borders; and after committing ſpoil on the low countries, they uſually made a haſty retreat into their mountains, where they were ſheltered from the purſuit of their enemies, and were ready to ſeize the firſt favourable opportunity of renewing their depredations. Griffith, the reigning prince, had greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in thoſe incurſions; and his name had become ſo terrible to the Engliſh, that Harold found he could do nothing more acceptable to the public, and more honourable for himſelf, than the ſuppreſſing of ſo dangerous an enemy. He formed the plan of an expedition againſt Wales;

Wales; and having prepared ſome light-armed foot to purſue the natives into their faſtneſſes, ſome cavalry to ſcour the open country, and a ſquadron of ſhips to attack the ſea-coaſt, he employed at once all theſe forces againſt the Welſh, proſecuted his advantages with vigour, made no intermiſſion in his aſſaults, and at laſt reduced the enemy to ſuch diſtreſs, that, in order to prevent their total deſtruction, they made a ſacrifice of their prince, whoſe head they cut off and ſent to Harold; and they were content to receive, as their ſovereigns, two Welſh noblemen appointed by Edward to rule over them. The other incident was no leſs honourable to Harold.

Toſti, brother of this nobleman, who had been created duke of Northumberland, being of a violent tyrannical temper, had acted with ſuch cruelty and injuſtice, that the inhabitants roſe in rebellion, and chaſed him from his government. Morcar and Edwin, two brothers, who poſſeſſed great power in thoſe parts, and who were grandſons of the great duke Leofric, concurred in the inſurrection; and the former, being elected duke, advanced with an army to oppoſe Harold, who was commiſſioned by the king to reduce and chaſtiſe the Northumbrians. Before the armies came to action, Morcar, well acquainted with the generous diſpoſition of the Engliſh commander, endeavoured to juſtify his own conduct. He repreſented to Harold, that Toſti had behaved in a manner unworthy of the ſtation to which he was advanced, and no one, not even a brother, could ſupport ſuch tyranny, without participating, in ſome degree, of the infamy attending it; that the Northumbrians, accuſtomed to a legal adminiſtration, and regarding it as their birth-right, were willing to ſubmit to the king, but required a governor who would pay regard to their rights and privileges; that they had been taught by their anceſtors, that death was preferable to ſervitude, and had taken the field, determined to periſh, rather than ſuffer a renewal of thoſe indignities to which they had ſo long been expoſed; and they truſted that Harold, on reflection, would not defend in

another that violent conduct, from which he himself, in his own government, had always kept at so great a distance. This vigorous remonstrance was accompanied with such a detail of facts, so well supported, that Harold found it prudent to abandon his brother's cause; and returning to Edward, he persuaded him to pardon the Northumbrians, and to confirm Morcar in the government. He even married the sister of that nobleman; and by his interest, procured Edwin, the younger brother, to be elected into the government of Mercia. Tosti in a rage departed the kingdom, and took shelter in Flanders with earl Baldwin, his father-in-law.

By this marriage Harold broke all measures with the duke of Normandy; and William clearly perceived that he could no longer rely on the oaths and promises which he had extorted from him. But the English nobleman was now in such a situation, that he deemed it no longer necessary to dissemble. He had, in his conduct towards the Northumbrians, given such a specimen of his moderation, as had gained him the affections of his countrymen. He saw that almost all England was engaged in his interests; while he himself possessed the government of Wessex, Morcar that of Northumberland, and Edwin that of Mercia. He now openly aspired to the succession; and insisted that, since it was necessary, by the confession of all, to set aside the royal family, on account of the imbecility of Edgar, the sole surviving heir, there was no one so capable of filling the throne as a nobleman of great power, of mature age, of long experience, of approved courage and abilities, who, being a native of the kingdom, would effectually secure it against the dominion and tyranny of foreigners. Edward, broken with age and infirmities, saw the difficulties too great for him to encounter; and though his inveterate prepossessions kept him from seconding the pretensions of Harold, he took but feeble and irresolute steps for securing the succession to the duke of Normandy *. While he continued in this uncertainty, he

* See note [F] at the end of the volume.

was

was ſurpriſed by ſickneſs, which brought him to his grave, on the fifth of January 1066, in the ſixty-fifth year of his age, and twenty-fifth of his reign.

This prince, to whom the monks gave the title of ſaint and confeſſor, was the laſt of the Saxon line that ruled in England. Though his reign was peaceable and fortunate, he owed his proſperity leſs to his own abilities than to the conjunctures of the times. The Danes, employed in other enterpriſes, attempted not thoſe incurſions which had been ſo troubleſome to all his predeceſſors, and fatal to ſome of them. The facility of his diſpoſition made him acquieſce under the government of Godwin and his ſon Harold; and the abilities, as well as the power, of theſe noblemen enabled them, while they were entruſted with authority, to preſerve domeſtic peace and tranquillity. The moſt commendable circumſtance of Edward's government, was his attention to the adminiſtration of juſtice, and his compiling, for that purpoſe, a body of laws, which he collected from the laws of Ethelbert, Ina, and Alfred. This compilation, though now loſt (for the laws that paſs under Edward's name were compoſed afterwards), was long the object of affection to the Engliſh nation.

Edward the Confeſſor was the firſt that touched for the king's evil: The opinion of his ſanctity procured belief to this cure among the people: His ſucceſſors regarded it as a part of their ſtate and grandeur to uphold the ſame opinion. It has been continued down to our time; and the practice was firſt dropped by the preſent royal family, who obſerved, that it could no longer give amazement even to the populace, and was attended with ridicule in the eyes of all men of underſtanding.

HAROLD.

HAROLD had ſo well prepared matters before the death of Edward (January 1066), that he immediately ſtepped into the vacant throne; and his acceſſion was attended with as little oppoſition and diſturbance, as if he had ſucceeded by the moſt undoubted hereditary title.

The citizens of London were his zealous partiſans: The biſhops and clergy had adopted his cauſe: And all the powerful nobility, connected with him by alliance or friendſhip, willingly ſeconded his pretenſions. The title of Edgar Atheling was ſcarcely mentioned; much leſs the claim of the duke of Normandy: And Harold, aſſembling his partiſans, received the crown from their hands, without waiting for the free deliberation of the ſtates, or regularly ſubmitting the queſtion to their determination *. If any were averſe to this meaſure, they were obliged to conceal their ſentiments; and the new prince, taking a general ſilence for conſent, and founding his title on the ſuppoſed ſuffrages of the people, which appeared unanimous, was, on the day immediately ſucceeding Edward's death, crowned and anointed King, by Aldred archbiſhop of York. The whole nation ſeemed joyfully to acquieſce in his elevation.

The firſt ſymptoms of danger which the king diſcovered came from abroad, and from his own brother Toſti, who had ſubmitted to a voluntary baniſhment in Flanders. Enraged at the ſucceſsful ambition of Harold, to which he himſelf had fallen a victim, he filled the court of Baldwin with complaints of the injuſtice which he had ſuffered: He engaged the intereſt of that family againſt his brother: He endeavoured to form intrigues with ſome of the diſcontented nobles in England: He ſent his emiſſaries to Norway, in order to rouſe to arms the freebooters of that kingdom, and to excite their hopes of reaping advantage from the unſettled ſtate of affairs on the uſurpation of the new king: And that he might render the combination more formidable, he made a journey to Normandy; in expectation that the duke, who had married Matilda, another daughter of Baldwin, would, in revenge of his own wrongs, as well as thoſe of Toſti, ſecond, by his counſels and forces, the projected invaſion of England.

* Many of the hiſtorians ſay, that Harold was regularly elected by the ſtates: Some, that Edward left him his ſucceſſor by will.

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The duke of Normandy, when he firſt received intelligence of Harold's intrigues and acceſſion, had been moved to the higheſt pitch of indignation; but that he might give the better colour to his pretenſions, he ſent an embaſſy to England, upbraiding that prince with his breach of faith, and ſummoning him to reſign immediately poſſeſſion of the kingdom. Harold replied to the Norman ambaſſadors, that the oath, with which he was reproached, had been extorted by the well-grounded fear of violence, and could never, for that reaſon, be regarded as obligatory: That he had had no commiſſion, either from the late king or the ſtates of England, who alone could diſpoſe of the crown, to make any tender of the ſucceſſion to the duke of Normandy; and if he, a private perſon, had aſſumed ſo much authority, and had even voluntarily ſworn to ſupport the duke's pretenſions, the oath was unlawful, and it was his duty to ſeize the firſt opportunity of breaking it: That he had obtained the crown by the unanimous ſuffrages of the people; and ſhould prove himſelf totally unworthy of their favour, did he not ſtrenuouſly maintain thoſe national liberties, with whoſe protection they had entruſted him: And that the duke, if he made any attempt by force of arms, ſhould experience the power of an united nation, conducted by a prince, who, ſenſible of the obligations impoſed on him by his royal dignity, was determined that the ſame moment ſhould put a period to his life and to his government.

This anſwer was no other than William expected; and he had previouſly fixed his reſolution of making an attempt upon England. Conſulting only his courage, his reſentment, and his ambition, he overlooked all the difficulties inſeparable from an attack on a great kingdom by ſuch inferior force, and he ſaw only the circumſtances which would facilitate his enterpriſe. He conſidered that England, ever ſince the acceſſion of Canute, had enjoyed profound tranquillity, during a period of near fifty years; and it would require time for its ſoldiers, enervated by long peace, to learn diſcipline, and its generals experience. He knew that it was entirely unprovided

unprovided with fortified towns, by which it could prolong the war; but muſt venture its whole fortune in one deciſive action againſt a veteran enemy, who, being once maſter of the field, would be in a condition to over-run the kingdom. He ſaw that Harold, though he had given proofs of vigour and bravery, had newly mounted a throne, which he had acquired by faction, from which he had excluded a very ancient royal family, and which was likely to totter under him by its own inſtability, much more if ſhaken by any violent external impulſe. And he hoped, that the very circumſtance of his croſſing the ſea, quitting his own country, and leaving himſelf no hopes of retreat; as it would aſtoniſh the enemy by the boldneſs of the enterpriſe, would inſpirit his ſoldiers by deſpair, and rouſe them to ſuſtain the reputation of the Norman arms.

The Normans, as they had long been diſtinguiſhed by valour among all the European nations, had at this time attained to the higheſt pitch of military glory. Beſides acquiring by arms ſuch a noble territory in France, beſides defending it againſt continual attempts of the French monarch and all its neighbours, beſides exerting many acts of vigour under their preſent ſovereign; they had, about this very time, revived their ancient fame, by the moſt hazardous exploits, and the moſt wonderful ſucceſſes, in the other extremity of Europe. A few Norman adventurers in Italy had acquired ſuch an aſcendant not only over the Italians and Greeks, but the Germans and Saracens, that they expelled thoſe foreigners, procured to themſelves ample eſtabliſhments, and laid the foundation of the opulent kingdom of Naples and Sicily. Theſe enterpriſes of men, who were all of them vaſſals in Normandy, many of them baniſhed for faction and rebellion, excited the ambition of the haughty William; who diſdained, after ſuch examples of fortune and valour, to be deterred from making an attack on a neighbouring country, where he could be ſupported by the whole force of his principality.

The ſituation alſo of Europe inſpired William with hopes that, beſides his brave Normans, he might employ

ploy againſt England the flower of the military force which was diſperſed in all the neighbouring ſtates. France, Germany, and the Low Countries, by the progreſs of the feudal inſtitutions, were divided and ſubdivided into many principalities and baronies; and the poſſeſſors, enjoying the civil juriſdiction within themſelves, as well as the right of arms, acted, in many reſpects, as independent ſovereigns, and maintained their properties and privileges leſs by the authority of laws than by their own force and valour. A military ſpirit had univerſally diffuſed itſelf throughout Europe; and the ſeveral leaders, whoſe minds were elevated by their princely ſituation, greedily embraced the moſt hazardous enterpriſes; and being accuſtomed to nothing from their infancy but recitals of the ſucceſs attending wars and battles, they were prompted by a natural ambition to imitate thoſe adventures, which they heard ſo much celebrated, and which were ſo much exaggerated by the credulity of the age. United, however looſely, by their duty to one ſuperior lord, and by their connections with the great body of the community to which they belonged, they deſired to ſpread their fame each beyond his own diſtrict; and in all aſſemblies, whether inſtituted for civil deliberations, for military expeditions, or merely for ſhow and entertainment, to outſhine each other by the reputation of ſtrength and proweſs. Hence their genius for chivalry; hence their impatience of peace and tranquillity; and hence their readineſs to embark in any dangerous enterpriſe, how little ſoever intereſted in its failure or ſucceſs.

William, by his power, his courage, and his abilities, had long maintained a pre-eminence among thoſe haughty chieftains; and every one who deſired to ſignaliſe himſelf by his addreſs in military exerciſes, or his valour in action, had been ambitious of acquiring a reputation in the court and in the armies of Normandy. Entertained with that hoſpitality and courteſy which diſtinguiſhed the age, they had formed attachments with the prince, and greedily attended to the proſpects of the

ſignal

ſignal glory and elevation which he promiſed them in return for their concurrence in an expedition againſt England. The more grandeur there appeared in the attempt, the more it ſuited their romantic ſpirit: The fame of the intended invaſion was already diffuſed everywhere: Multitudes crowded to tender to the duke their ſervice, with that of their vaſſals and retainers: And William found leſs difficulty in completing his levies, than in chuſing the moſt veteran forces, and in rejecting the offers of thoſe who were impatient to acquire fame under ſo renowned a leader.

Beſides theſe advantages, which William owed to his perſonal valour and good conduct; he was indebted to fortune for procuring him ſome aſſiſtance, and alſo for removing many obſtacles which it was natural for him to expect in an undertaking, in which all his neighbours were ſo deeply intereſted. Conan count of Britanny was his mortal enemy: In order to throw a damp upon the duke's enterpriſe, he choſe this conjuncture for reviving his claim to Normandy itſelf; and he required that, in caſe of William's ſucceſs againſt England, the poſſeſſion of that dutchy ſhould devolve to him. But Conan died ſuddenly after making this demand; and Hoel, his ſucceſſor, inſtead of adopting the malignity, or, more properly ſpeaking, the prudence of his predeceſſor, zealouſly ſeconded the duke's views, and ſent his eldeſt ſon, Alain Fergant, to ſerve under him with a body of five thouſand Britons. The counts of Anjou and of Flanders encouraged their ſubjects to engage in the expedition; and even the court of France, though it might juſtly fear the aggrandizement of ſo dangerous a vaſſal, purſued not its intereſts on this occaſion with ſufficient vigour and reſolution. Philip I. the reigning monarch, was a minor; and William, having communicated his project to the council, having deſired aſſiſtance, and offered to do homage, in caſe of his ſucceſs, for the crown of England, was indeed openly ordered to lay aſide all thoughts of the enterpriſe; but the earl of Flanders, his father-in-law, being at the head of the regency,

gency, favoured under-hand his levies, and ſecretly encouraged the adventurous nobility to inliſt under the ſtandard of the duke of Normandy.

The emperor, Henry IV. beſides openly giving all his vaſſals permiſſion to embark in this expedition, which ſo much engaged the attention of Europe, promiſed his protection to the dutchy of Normandy during the abſence of the prince, and thereby enabled him to employ his whole force in the invaſion of England. But the moſt important ally, whom William gained by his negotiations, was the pope, who had a mighty influence over the ancient barons, no leſs devout in their religious principles, than valorous in their military enterpriſes. The Roman pontiff, after an inſenſible progreſs, during ſeveral ages of darkneſs and ignorance, began now to lift his head openly above all the princes of Europe; to aſſume the office of a mediator, or even an arbiter, in the quarrels of the greateſt monarchs; to interpoſe in all ſecular affairs; and to obtrude his dictates as ſovereign laws on his obſequious diſciples. It was a ſufficient motive to Alexander II. the reigning pope, for embracing William's quarrel, that he alone had made an appeal to his tribunal, and rendered him umpire of the diſpute between him and Harold; but there were other advantages which that pontiff foreſaw muſt reſult from the conqueſt of England by the Norman arms. That kingdom, though at firſt converted by Romiſh miſſionaries, though it had afterwards advanced ſome farther ſteps towards ſubjection to Rome, maintained ſtill a conſiderable independence in its eccleſiaſtical adminiſtration; and forming a world within itſelf, entirely ſeparated from the reſt of Europe, it had hitherto proved inacceſſible to thoſe exorbitant claims which ſupported the grandeur of the papacy. Alexander therefore hoped, that the French and Norman barons, if ſucceſsful in their enterpriſe, might import into that country a more devoted reverence to the holy ſee, and bring the Engliſh churches to a nearer conformity with thoſe of the continent. He declared immediately in favour of William's claim; pronounced Harold a perjured uſurp-

er; denounced excommunication againſt him and his adherents; and the more to encourage the duke of Normandy in his enterpriſe, he ſent him a conſecrated banner, and a ring with one of St. Peter's hairs in it. Thus were all the ambition and violence of that invaſion covered over ſafely with the broad mantle of religion.

The greateſt difficulty which William had to encounter in his preparations, aroſe from his own ſubjects in Normandy. The ſtates of the dutchy were aſſembled at Liſlebonne; and ſupplies being demanded for the intended enterpriſe, which promiſed ſo much glory and advantage to their country, there appeared a reluctance in many members both to grant ſums ſo much beyond the common meaſure of taxes in that age, and to ſet a precedent of performing their military ſervice at a diſtance from their own country. The duke, finding it dangerous to ſolicit them in a body, conferred ſeparately with the richeſt individuals in the province; and beginning with thoſe on whoſe affections he moſt relied, he gradually engaged all of them to advance the ſums demanded. The count of Longueville ſeconded him in this negotiation; as did the count of Mortaigne, Odo biſhop of Baieux, and eſpecially William Fitz-Oſborne, count of Breteüil, and conſtable of the dutchy. Every perſon, when he himſelf was once engaged, endeavoured to bring over others; and at laſt the ſtates themſelves, after ſtipulating that this conceſſion ſhould be no precedent, voted that they would aſſiſt their prince to the utmoſt in his intended enterpriſe.

William had now aſſembled a fleet of three thouſand veſſels, great and ſmall, and had ſelected an army of ſixty thouſand men from among thoſe numerous ſupplies which from every quarter ſolicited to be received into his ſervice. The camp bore a ſplendid yet a martial appearance, from the diſcipline of the men, the beauty and vigour of the horſes, the luſtre of the arms, and the accoutrements of both; but above all, from the high names of nobility who engaged under the banners of the duke of Normandy. The moſt celebrated were Euſtace count of Bologne, Aimeri de Thouars, Hugh

d'Eſtaples, William d'Evreux, Geoffrey de Rotrou, Roger de Beaumont, William de Warenne, Roger de Montgomery, Hugh de Grantmeſnil, Charles Martel, and Geoffrey Giffard. To theſe bold chieftains William held up the ſpoils of England as the prize of their valour; and pointing to the oppoſite ſhore, called to them, that *there* was the field, on which they muſt erect trophies to their name, and fix their eſtabliſhments.

While he was making theſe mighty preparations, the duke, that he might increaſe the number of Harold's enemies, excited the inveterate rancour of Toſti, and encouraged him, in concert with Harold Halfager, king of Norway, to infeſt the coaſts of England. Toſti, having collected about ſixty veſſels in the ports of Flanders, put to ſea; and after committing ſome depredations on the ſouth and eaſt coaſts, he ſailed to Northumberland, and was there joined by Halfager, who came over with a great armament of three hundred ſail. The combined fleets entered the Humber, and diſembarked the troops, who began to extend their depredations on all ſides; when Morcar earl of Northumberland, and Edwin earl of Mercia, the king's brothers-in-law, having haſtily collected ſome forces, ventured to give them battle. The action ended in the defeat and flight of theſe two noblemen.

Harold, informed of this defeat, haſtened with an army to the protection of his people; and expreſſed the utmoſt ardour to ſhow himſelf worthy of the crown which had been conferred upon him. This prince, though he was not ſenſible of the full extent of his danger, from the great combination againſt him, had employed every art of popularity to acquire the affections of the public; and he gave ſo many proofs of an equitable and prudent adminiſtration, that the Engliſh found no reaſon to repent the choice which they had made of a ſovereign. They flocked from all quarters to join his ſtandard; and as ſoon as he reached the enemy at Standford, he found himſelf in a condition to give them battle. The action (Sept. 25) was bloody;

but the victory was deciſive on the ſide of Harold, and ended in the total rout of the Norvegians, together with the death of Toſti and Halfager. Even the Norvegian fleet fell into hands of Harold; who had the generoſity to give prince Olave, the ſon of Halfager, his liberty, and allow him to depart with twenty veſſels. But he had ſcarcely time to rejoice for this victory, when he received intelligence that the duke Normandy was landed with a great army in the ſouth of England.

The Norman fleet and army had been aſſembled, early in the ſummer, at the mouth of the ſmall river Dive, and all the troops had been inſtantly embarked; but the winds proved long contrary, and detained them in that harbour. The authority, however, of the duke, the good diſcipline maintained among the ſeamen and ſoldiers, and the great care in ſupplying them with proviſions, had prevented any diſorder; when at laſt the wind became favourable, and enabled them to ſail along the coaſt, till they reached St. Valori. There were, however, ſeveral veſſels loſt in this ſhort paſſage; and as the wind again proved contrary, the army began to imagine that Heaven had declared againſt them, and that, notwithſtanding the pope's benediction, they were deſtined to certain deſtruction. Theſe bold warriors, who deſpiſed real dangers, were very ſubject to the dread of imaginary ones; and many of them began to mutiny, ſome of them even to deſert their colours; when the duke, in order to ſupport their drooping hopes, ordered a proceſſion to be made with the reliques of St. Valori, and prayers to be ſaid for more favourable weather. The wind inſtantly changed; and as this incident happened on the eve of the feaſt of St. Michael, the tutelar ſaint of Normandy, the ſoldiers, fancying they ſaw the hand of Heaven in all theſe concurring circumſtances, ſet out with the greateſt alacrity: They met with no oppoſition on their paſſage: A great fleet, which Harold had aſſembled, and which had cruiſed all ſummer off the Iſle of Wight, had been diſmiſſed, on his receiving falſe intelligence that William, diſcouraged by contrary

contrary winds and other accidents, had laid aſide his preparations. The Norman armament, proceeding in great order, arrived, without any material loſs, at Pevenſey in Suſſex; and the army quietly diſembarked. The duke himſelf, as he leaped on ſhore, happened to ſtumble and fall; but had the preſence of mind, it is ſaid, to turn the omen to his advantage, by calling aloud that he had taken poſſeſſion of the country. And a ſoldier, running to a neighbouring cottage, plucked ſome thatch, which, as if giving him ſeiſine of the kingdom, he preſented to his general. The joy and alacrity of William and his whole army was ſo great, that they were nowiſe diſcouraged, even when they heard of Harold's great victory over the Norvegians: They ſeemed rather to wait with impatience the arrival of the enemy.

The victory of Harold, though great and honourable, had proved in the main prejudicial to his intereſts, and may be regarded as the immediate cauſe of his ruin. He loſt many of his braveſt officers and ſoldiers in the action; and he diſguſted the reſt, by refuſing to diſtribute the Norvegian ſpoils among them: A conduct which was little agreeable to his uſual generoſity of temper; but which his deſire of ſparing the people, in the war that impended over him from the duke of Normandy, had probably occaſioned. He haſtened, by quick marches, to reach this new invader; but though he was reinforced at London and other places with freſh troops, he found himſelf alſo weakened by the deſertion of his old ſoldiers, who from fatigue and diſcontent ſecretly withdrew from their colours. His brother Gurth, a man of bravery and conduct, began to entertain apprehenſions of the event; and remonſtrated with the king, that it would be better policy to prolong the war; at leaſt, to ſpare his own perſon in the action. He urged to him, that the deſperate ſituation of the duke of Normandy made it requiſite for that prince to bring matters to a ſpeedy deciſion, and put his whole fortune on the iſſue of a battle; but that the king of England, in his own country, beloved by his ſubjects, provided

with every ſupply, had more certain and leſs dangerous means of enſuring to himſelf the victory: That the Norman troops, elated on the one hand with the higheſt hopes, and ſeeing, on the other, no reſource in caſe of a diſcomfiture, would fight to the laſt extremity; and being the flower of all the warriors of the continent, muſt be regarded as formidable to the Engliſh: That if their firſt fire, which is always the moſt dangerous, were allowed to languiſh for want of action; if they were haraſſed with ſmall ſkirmiſhes, ſtraitened in proviſions, and fatigued with the bad weather and deep roads during the winter ſeaſon, which was approaching, they muſt fall an eaſy and a bloodleſs prey to their enemy: That if a general action were delayed, the Engliſh, ſenſible of the imminent danger to which their properties, as well as liberties, were expoſed from thoſe rapacious invaders, would haſten from all quarters to his aſſiſtance, and would render his army invincible: That, at leaſt, if he thought it neceſſary to hazard a battle, he ought not to expoſe his own perſon; but reſerve, in caſe of diſaſtrous accidents, ſome reſource to the liberty and independence of the kingdom: And that having once been ſo unfortunate as to be conſtrained to ſwear, and that upon the holy reliques, to ſupport the pretenſions of the duke of Normandy, it were better that the command of the army ſhould be entruſted to another, who, not being bound by thoſe ſacred ties, might give the ſoldiers more aſſured hopes of a proſperous iſſue to the combat.

Harold was deaf to all theſe remonſtrances: Elated with his paſt proſperity, as well as ſtimulated by his native courage, he reſolved to give battle in perſon; and for that purpoſe he drew near to the Normans, who had removed their camp and fleet to Haſtings, where they fixed their quarters. He was ſo confident of ſucceſs, that he ſent a meſſage to the duke, promiſing him a ſum of money if he would depart the kingdom without effuſion of blood: But his offer was rejected with diſdain; and William, not to be behind with his enemy in vaunting, ſent him a meſſage by ſome monks, requiring

requiring him either to reſign the kingdom, or to hold it of him in fealty, or to ſubmit their cauſe to the arbitration of the pope, or to fight him in ſingle combat. Harold replied, that the God of battles would ſoon be the arbiter of all their differences.

The Engliſh and Normans now prepared themſelves for this important deciſion; but the aſpect of things, on the night before the battle (14th October), was very different in the two camps. The Engliſh ſpent the time in riot, and jollity, and diſorder; the Normans in ſilence, and in prayer, and in the other functions of their religion. On the morning, the duke called together the moſt conſiderable of his commanders, and made them a ſpeech ſuitable to the occaſion. He repreſented to them, that the event, which they and he had long wiſhed for, was approaching; the whole fortune of the war now depended on their ſwords, and would be decided in a ſingle action: That never army had greater motives for exerting a vigorous courage, whether they conſidered the prize which would attend their victory, or the inevitable deſtruction which muſt enſue upon their diſcomfiture: That if their martial and veteran bands could once break thoſe raw ſoldiers, who had raſhly dared to approach them, they conquered a kingdom at one blow, and were juſtly entitled to all its poſſeſſions as the reward of their proſperous valour: That, on the contrary, if they remitted in the leaſt their wonted proweſs, an enraged enemy hung upon their rear, the ſea met them in their retreat, and an ignominious death was the certain puniſhment of their imprudent cowardice: That, by collecting ſo numerous and brave a hoſt, he had enſured every human means of conqueſt; and the commander of the enemy, by his criminal conduct, had given him juſt cauſe to hope for the favour of the Almighty, in whoſe hands alone lay the event of wars and battles: And that a perjured uſurper, anathematized by the ſovereign pontiff, and conſcious of his own breach of faith, would be ſtruck with terror on their appearance, and would prognoſticate to himſelf that fate which his multiplied crimes had ſo juſtly merited.

merited. The duke next divided his army into three lines: The firſt, led by Montgomery, conſiſted of archers and light-armed infantry: The ſecond, commanded by Martel, was compoſed of his braveſt battalions, heavy-armed, and ranged in cloſe order: His cavalry, at whoſe head he placed himſelf, formed the third line; and were ſo diſpoſed, that they ſtretched beyond the infantry, and flanked each wing of the army. He ordered the ſignal of battle to be given; and the whole army, moving at once, and ſinging the hymn or ſong of Roland, the famous peer of Charlemagne, advanced in order and with alacrity towards the enemy.

Harold had ſeized the advantage of a riſing ground, and having likewiſe drawn ſome trenches to ſecure his flanks, he reſolved to ſtand upon the defenſive, and to avoid all action with the cavalry, in which he was inferior. The Kentiſh men were placed in the van; a poſt which they had always claimed as their due: The Londoners guarded the ſtandard: And the king himſelf, accompanied by his two valiant brothers, Gurth and Leofwin, diſmounting, placed himſelf at the head of his infantry, and expreſſed his reſolution to conquer, or to periſh in the action. The firſt attack of the Normans was deſperate, but was received with equal valour by the Engliſh; and after a furious combat, which remained long undecided, the former, overcome by the difficulty of the ground, and hard preſſed by the enemy, began firſt to relax their vigour, then to retreat; and confuſion was ſpreading among the ranks, when William, who found himſelf on the brink of deſtruction, haſtened with a ſelect band to the relief of his diſmayed forces. His preſence reſtored the action; the Engliſh were obliged to retire with loſs; and the duke, ordering his ſecond line to advance, renewed the attack with freſh forces, and with redoubled courage. Finding that the enemy, aided by the advantage of ground, and animated by the example of their prince, ſtill made a vigorous reſiſtance, he tried a ſtratagem, which was very delicate in its management, but which ſeemed adviſable in his deſperate ſituation, where, if he gained not a deciſive victory,

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he was totally undone: He commanded his troops to make a haſty retreat, and to allure the enemy from their ground by the appearance of flight. The artifice ſucceeded againſt thoſe unexperienced ſoldiers, who, heated by the action, and ſanguine in their hopes, precipitately followed the Normans into the plain. William gave orders, that at once the infantry ſhould face about upon their purſuers, and the cavalry make an aſſault upon their wings, and both of them purſue the advantage, which the ſurpriſe and terror of the enemy muſt give them in that critical and deciſive moment. The Engliſh were repulſed with great ſlaughter, and driven back to the hill; where, being rallied by the bravery of Harold, they were able, notwithſtanding their loſs, to maintain the poſt, and continue the combat. The duke tried the ſame ſtratagem a ſecond time with the ſame ſucceſs; but even after this double advantage, he ſtill found a great body of the Engliſh, who, maintaining themſelves in firm array, ſeemed determined to diſpute the victory to the laſt extremity. He ordered his heavy-armed infantry to make an aſſault upon them; while his archers, placed behind, ſhould gall the enemy, who were expoſed by the ſituation of the ground, and who were intent in defending themſelves againſt the ſwords and ſpears of the aſſailants. By this diſpoſition he at laſt prevailed: Harold was ſlain by an arrow, while he was combating with great bravery at the head of his men: His two brothers ſhared the ſame fate: And the Engliſh, diſcouraged by the fall of thoſe princes, gave ground on all ſides, and were purſued with great ſlaughter by the victorious Normans. A few troops, however, of the vanquiſhed had ſtill the courage to turn upon their purſuers; and attacking them in deep and miry ground, obtained ſome revenge for the ſlaughter and diſhonour of the day. But the appearance of the duke obliged them to ſeek their ſafety by flight; and darkneſs ſaved them from any farther purſuit by the enemy.

Thus was gained by William duke of Normandy, the great and decisive victory of Haſtings, after a battle which was fought from morning till ſunſet, and which

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ſeemed worthy, by the heroic valour diſplayed by both armies, and by both commanders, to decide the fate of a mighty kingdom. William had three horſes killed under him; and there fell near fifteen thouſand men on the ſide of the Normans: The loſs was ſtill more conſiderable on that of the vanquiſhed; beſides the death of the king and his two brothers. The dead body of Harold was brought to William, and was generouſly reſtored without ranſom to his mother. The Norman army left not the field of battle without giving thanks to Heaven in the moſt ſolemn manner for their victory: And the prince, having refreſhed his troops, prepared to puſh to the utmoſt his advantage againſt the divided, diſmayed, and diſcomfited Engliſh.

APPENDIX I.

THE ANGLO-SAXON GOVERNMENT AND MANNERS.

First Saxon government—Succeſſion of the kings—The Wittenagemot—The ariſtocracy—The ſeveral orders of men—Courts of juſtice—Criminal law—Rules of proof—Military force—Public revenue—Value of money—Manners.

THE government of the Germans, and that of all the northern nations, who eſtabliſhed themſelves on the ruins of Rome, was always extremely free; and thoſe fierce people, accuſtomed to independence and enured to arms, were more guided by perſuaſion than authority, in the ſubmiſſion which they paid to their princes. The military deſpotiſm, which had taken place in the Roman empire, and which, previouſly to the irruption of thoſe conquerors, had ſunk the genius of men, and deſtroyed every noble principle of ſcience and virtue, was unable to reſiſt the vigorous efforts of a free people; and Europe, as from a new epoch, rekindled her ancient ſpirit, and ſhook off the baſe ſervitude to arbitrary will and authority under which ſhe had ſo long laboured. The free conſtitutions then eſtabliſhed, however impaired by the encroachments of ſucceeding princes, ſtill preſerve an air of independence and legal adminiſtration, which diſtinguiſh the European nations; and if that part of the globe maintain ſentiments of liberty, honour, equity, and valour, ſuperior to the reſt of mankind, it owes theſe advantages chiefly to the ſeeds implanted by thoſe generous barbarians.

The Saxons, who ſubdued Britain, as they enjoyed great liberty in their own country, obſtinately retained that invaluable poſſeſſion in their new ſettlement; and they

they imported into this iſland the ſame principles of independence, which they had inherited from their anceſtors. The chieftains (for ſuch they were, more properly than kings or princes) who commanded them in thoſe military expeditions, ſtill poſſeſſed a very limited authority; and as the Saxons exterminated, rather than ſubdued, the ancient inhabitants, they were indeed tranſplanted into a new territory, but preſerved unaltered all their civil and military inſtitutions. The language was pure Saxon; even the names of places, which often remain while the tongue entirely changes, were almoſt all affixed by the conquerors; the manners and cuſtoms were wholly German; and the ſame picture of a fierce and bold liberty, which is drawn by the maſterly pencil of Tacitus, will ſuit thoſe founders of the Engliſh government. The king, ſo far from being inveſted with arbitrary power, was only conſidered as the firſt among the citizens; his authority depended more on his perſonal qualities than on his ſtation; he was even ſo far on a level with the people, that a ſtated price was fixed for his head, and a legal fine was levied upon his murderer, which, though proportionate to his ſtation, and ſuperior to that paid for the life of a ſubject, was a ſenſible mark of his ſubordination to the community.

It is eaſy to imagine, that an independent people, ſo little reſtrained by law and cultivated by ſcience, would not be very ſtrict in maintaining a regular ſucceſſion of their princes. Though they paid great regard to the royal family, and aſcribed to it an undiſputed ſuperiority, they either had no rule, or none that was ſteadily obſerved, in filling the vacant throne; and preſent convenience, in that emergency, was more attended to than general principles. We are not, however, to ſuppoſe that the crown was conſidered as altogether elective; and that a regular plan was traced by the conſtitution for ſupplying, by the ſuffrages of the people, every vacancy made by the demiſe of the firſt magiſtrate. If any king left a ſon of an age and capacity fit for government, the young prince naturally

naturally ſtepped into the throne: If he was a minor, his uncle, or the next prince of the blood, was promoted to the government, and left the ſceptre to his poſterity: Any ſovereign, by taking previous meaſures with the leading men, had it greatly in his power to appoint his ſucceſſor: All theſe changes, and indeed the ordinary adminiſtration of government, required the expreſs concurrence, or at leaſt the tacit acquieſcence, of the people; but poſſeſſion, however obtained, was extremely apt to ſecure their obedience, and the idea of any right, which was once excluded, was but feeble and imperfect. This is ſo much the caſe in all barbarous monarchies, and occurs ſo often in the hiſtory of the Anglo-Saxons, that we cannot conſiſtently entertain any other notion of their government. The idea of an hereditary ſucceſſion in authority is ſo natural to men, and is ſo much fortified by the uſual rule in tranſmitting private poſſeſſions, that it muſt retain a great influence on every ſociety, which does not exclude it by the refinements of a republican conſtitution. But as there is a material difference between government and private poſſeſſions, and every man is not as much qualified for exerciſing the one, as for enjoying the other, a people, who are not ſenſible of the general advantages attending a fixed rule, are apt to make great leaps in the ſucceſſion, and frequently to paſs over the perſon, who, had he poſſeſſed the requiſite years and abilities, would have been thought entitled to the ſovereignty. Thus, theſe monarchies are not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, either elective or hereditary; and though the deſtination of a prince may often be followed in appointing his ſucceſſor, they can as little be regarded as wholly teſtamentary. The ſtates by their ſuffrage may ſometimes eſtabliſh a ſovereign; but they more frequently recogniſe the perſon whom they find eſtabliſhed: A few great men take the lead; the people, overawed and influenced, acquieſce in the government; and the reigning prince, provided he be of the royal family, paſſes undiſputedly for the legal ſovereign.

It

It is confeſſed, that our knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon hiſtory and antiquities is too imperfect to afford us means of determining, with certainty, all the prerogatives of the crown and privileges of the people, or of giving an exact delineation of that government. It is probable alſo, that the conſtitution might be ſomewhat different in the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and that it changed conſiderably during the courſe of ſix centuries, which elapſed from the firſt invaſion of the Saxons till the Norman conqueſt *. But moſt of theſe differences and changes, with their cauſes and effects, are unknown to us: It only appears, that at all times, and in all the kingdoms, there was a national council, called a Wittenagemot, or aſſembly of the wiſe men (for that is the import of the term), whoſe conſent was requiſite for enacting laws and for ratifying the chief acts of public adminiſtration. The preambles to all the laws of Ethelbert, Ina, Alfred, Edward the Elder, Athelſtan, Edmond, Edgar, Ethelred, and Edward the Confeſſor; even thoſe to the laws of Canute, though a kind of conqueror; put this matter beyond controverſy, and carry proofs every-where of a limited and legal government. But who were the conſtituent members of this Wittenagemot has not been determined with certainty by antiquaries. It is agreed, that the biſhops and abbots † were an eſſential part; and it is alſo evi-

* We know of one change, not inconſiderable, in the Saxon conſtitution. The Saxon Annals inform us, that it was in early times the prerogative of the king to name the dukes, earls, aldermen, and ſheriffs of the counties. Aſſer, a contemporary writer, informs us, that Alfred depoſed all the ignorant aldermen, and appointed men of more capacity in their place: Yet the laws of Edward the Confeſſor, § 35. ſay expreſsly, that the heretoghs or dukes, and the ſheriffs, were choſen by the freeholders in the folkmote, a county court, which was aſſembled once a-year, and where all the freeholders ſwore allegiance to the king.

† Sometimes abbeſſes were admitted; at leaſt, they often ſign the king's charters or grants.

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dent, from the tenor of thoſe ancient laws, that the Wittenagemot enacted ſtatutes which regulated the eccleſiaſtical as well as civil government, and that thoſe dangerous principles, by which the church is totally ſevered from the ſtate, were hitherto unknown to the Anglo-Saxons. It alſo appears, that the aldermen, or governors of counties, who after the Daniſh times were often called earls *, were admitted into this council, and gave their conſent to the public ſtatutes. But beſides the prelates and aldermen, there is alſo mention of the wites, or wiſemen, as a component part of the Wittenagemot; but who *theſe* were, is not ſo clearly aſcertained by the laws or the hiſtory of that period. The matter would probably be of difficult diſcuſſion, even were it examined impartially; but as our modern parties have choſen to divide on this point, the queſtion has been diſputed with the greater obſtinacy, and the arguments on both ſides have become, on that account, the more captious and deceitful. Our monarchical faction maintain, that theſe *wites*, or *ſapientes*, were the judges, or men learned in the law: The popular faction aſſert them to be repreſentatives of the boroughs, or what we now call the commons.

The expreſſions employed by all ancient hiſtorians, in mentioning the Wittenagemot, ſeem to contradict the latter ſuppoſition. The members are almoſt always called the *principes*, *ſatrapæ*, *optimates*, *magnates*, *proceres*; terms which ſeem to ſuppoſe an ariſtocracy, and to exclude the commons. The boroughs alſo, from the low ſtate of commerce, were ſo ſmall and ſo poor, and the inhabitants lived in ſuch dependence on the great men, that it ſeems nowiſe probable they would be admitted as a part of the national councils. The commons are well known to have had no ſhare in the governments eſtabliſhed by the Franks, Burgundians, and other northern nations; and we may conclude that the Saxons, who remained longer barbarous and uncivilized than thoſe tribes, would never think of confer-

* See note [G] at the end of the volume.

ring ſuch an extraordinary privilege on trade and induſtry. The military profeſſion alone was honourable among all thoſe conquerors: The warriors ſubſiſted by their poſſeſſions in land: They became conſiderable by their influence over their vaſſals, retainers, tenants, and ſlaves: And it requires ſtrong proof to convince us that they would admit any of a rank ſo much inferior as the burgeſſes, to ſhare with them in the legiſlative authority. Tacitus indeed affirms, that, among the ancient Germans, the conſent of all the members of the community was required in every important deliberation; but he ſpeaks not of repreſentatives; and this ancient practice, mentioned by the Roman hiſtorian, could only have place in ſmall tribes, where every citizen might, without inconvenience, be aſſembled upon any extraordinary emergency. After principalities became extenſive; after the difference of property had formed diſtinctions more important than thoſe which aroſe from perſonal ſtrength and valour; we may conclude, that the national aſſemblies muſt have been more limited in their number, and compoſed only of the more conſiderable citizens.

But though we muſt exclude the burgeſſes, or commons, from the Saxon Wittenagemot, there is ſome neceſſity for ſuppoſing that this aſſembly conſiſted of other members than the prelates, abbots, aldermen, and the judges or privy-council. For as all theſe, excepting ſome of the eccleſiaſtics *, were anciently appointed by the king, had there been no other legiſlative authority, the royal power had been in a great meaſure abſolute, contrary to the tenor of all the hiſtorians, and to the practice of all the northern nations. We may therefore

* There is ſome reaſon to think that the biſhops were ſometimes choſen by the Wittenagemot, and confirmed by the king. The abbots in the monaſteries of royal foundation were anciently named by the king; though Edgar gave the monks the election, and only reſerved to himſelf the ratification. This deſtination was afterwards frequently violated; and the abbots, as well as biſhops, were afterwards all appointed by the king; as we learn from Ingulf, a writer contemporary to the conqueſt.

conclude,

conclude, that the more conſiderable proprietors of land were, without any election, conſtituent members of the national aſſembly: There is reaſon to think that forty hydes, or between four and five thouſand acres, was the eſtate requiſite for entitling the poſſeſſor to this honourable privilege. We find a paſſage in an ancient author *, by which it appears, that a perſon of very noble birth, even one allied to the crown, was not eſteemed a *princeps* (the term uſually employed by ancient hiſtorians when the Wittenagemot is mentioned) till he had acquired a fortune of that amount. Nor need we imagine that the public council would become diſorderly or confuſed by admitting ſo great a multitude. The landed property of England was probably in few hands during the Saxon times; at leaſt during the later part of that period: And as men had hardly any ambition to attend thoſe public councils, there was no danger of the aſſembly's becoming too numerous for the diſpatch of the little buſineſs which was brought before them.

It is certain, that whatever we may determine concerning the conſtituent members of the Wittenagemot, in whom, with the king, the legiſlature reſided, the Anglo-Saxon government, in the period preceding the Norman conqueſt, was become extremely ariſtocratical: The royal authority was very limited; the people, even if admitted to that aſſembly, were of little or no weight and conſideration. We have hints given us in hiſtorians, of the great power and riches of particular noblemen: And it could not but happen, after the abolition of the Heptarchy, when the king lived at a diſtance from the provinces, that thoſe great proprietors, who reſided on their eſtates, would much augment their authority over their vaſſals and retainers, and over all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Hence the immeaſurable power aſſumed by Harold, Godwin, Leofric, Siward, Morcar, Edwin, Edric, and Alfric, who controlled the authority of the kings, and rendered themſelves quite neceſſary in the government. The two latter, though deteſted by the people, on account of their

* Hiſt. Elienſis, lib. ii. cap. 40.

joining a foreign enemy, ſtill preſerved their power and influence; and we may therefore conclude, that their authority was founded, not on popularity, but on family rights and poſſeſſions. There is one Atheliſtan mentioned in the reign of the king of that name, who is called alderman of all England, and is ſaid to be half-king; though the monarch himſelf was a prince of valour and abilities. And we find, that in the latter Saxon times, and in theſe alone, the great offices went from father to ſon, and became in a manner hereditary in the families *.

The circumſtances attending the invaſions of the Danes would alſo ſerve much to increaſe the power of the principal nobility. Thoſe freebooters made unexpected inroads on all quarters; and there was a neceſſity that each county ſhould reſiſt them by its own force, and under the conduct of its own nobility and its own magiſtrates. For the ſame reaſon that a general war, managed by the united efforts of the whole ſtate, commonly augments the power of the crown; thoſe private wars and inroads turned to the advantage of the aldermen and nobles.

Among that military and turbulent people, ſo averſe to commerce and the arts, and ſo little enured to induſtry, juſtice was commonly very ill adminiſtered, and great oppreſſion and violence ſeem to have prevailed. Theſe diſorders would be increaſed by the exorbitant power of the ariſtocracy; and would, in their turn, contribute to increaſe it. Men, not daring to rely on the guardianſhip of the laws, were obliged to devote themſelves to the ſervice of ſome chieftain, whoſe orders they followed, even to the diſturbance of the government,

* Roger Hoveden, giving the reaſon why William the Conqueror made Coſpatric earl of Northumberland, ſays, *Nam ex materno ſanguine attinebat ad eum honor illius comitatûs. Erat enim ex matre Algitha, filia Uthredi comitis.* We ſee in thoſe inſtances the ſame tendency towards rendering offices hereditary, which took place, during a more early period, on the continent; and which had already produced there its full effect.

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or the injury of their fellow-citizens, and who afforded them, in return, protection from any inſult or injuſtice by ſtrangers. Hence we find, by the extracts which Dr. Brady has given us from Domeſday, that almoſt all the inhabitants, even of towns, had placed themſelves under the clientſhip of ſome particular nobleman, whoſe patronage they purchaſed by annual payments, and whom they were obliged to conſider as their ſovereign, more than the king himſelf, or even the legiſlature *. A client, though a freeman, was ſuppoſed ſo much to belong to his patron, that his murderer was obliged by law to pay a fine to the latter, as a compenſation for his loſs; in like manner as he paid a fine to the maſter for the murder of his ſlave. Men who were of a more conſiderable rank, but not powerful enough, each to ſupport himſelf by his own independent authority, entered into formal confederacies with each other, and compoſed a kind of ſeparate community, which rendered itſelf formidable to all aggreſſors. Dr. Hickes has preſerved a curious Saxon bond of this kind, which he calls a *Sodalitium*, and which contains many particulars characteriſtical of the manners and cuſtoms of the times. All the aſſociates are there ſaid to be gentlemen of Cambridgeſhire; and they ſwear before the holy reliques to obſerve their confederacy, and to be faithful to each other: They promiſe to bury any of the aſſociates who dies, in whatever place he had appointed; to contribute to his funeral charges; and to attend at his interment; and whoever is wanting in this laſt duty, binds himſelf to pay a meaſure of honey. When any of the aſſociates is in danger, and calls for the aſſiſtance of his fellows, they promiſe, beſides flying to his ſuccour, to give information to the ſheriff; and if he be negligent in protecting the perſon expoſed to danger, they engage to levy a fine of one pound upon him: If the preſident of the ſociety himſelf be wanting in this particular, he binds himſelf to pay one

* The caſe was the ſame with the freemen in the country.

pound; unleſs he has the reaſonable excuſe of ſickneſs, or of duty to his ſuperior. When any of the aſſociates is murdered, they are to exact eight pounds from the murderer; and if he refuſe to pay it, they are to proſecute him for the ſum at their joint expence. If any of the aſſociates who happens to be poor kill a man, the ſociety are to contribute, by a certain proportion, to pay his fine: A mark apiece, if the fine be ſeven hundred ſhillings; leſs, if the perſon killed be a clown or ceorle; the half of that ſum again, if he be a Welſhman. But where any of the aſſociates kills a man, wilfully and without provocation, he muſt himſelf pay the fine. If any of the aſſociates kill any of his fellows in a like criminal manner, beſides paying the uſual fine to the relations of the deceaſed, he muſt pay eight pounds to the ſociety, or renounce the benefit of it: In which caſe, they bind themſelves, under the penalty of one pound, never to eat or drink with him, except in the preſence of the king, biſhop, or alderman. There are other regulations to protect themſelves and their ſervants from all injuries, to revenge ſuch as are committed, and to prevent their giving abuſive language to each other; and the fine, which they engage to pay for this laſt offence, is a meaſure of honey.

It is not to be doubted but a confederacy of this kind muſt have been a great ſource of friendſhip and attachment; when men lived in perpetual danger from enemies, robbers, and oppreſſors, and received protection chiefly from their perſonal valour, and from the aſſiſtance of their friends or patrons. As animoſities were then more violent, connections were alſo more intimate, whether voluntary or derived from blood: The moſt remote degree of propinquity was regarded: An indelible memory of benefits was preſerved: Severe vengeance was taken for injuries, both from a point of honour, and as the beſt means of future ſecurity: And the civil union being weak, many private engagements were contracted in order to ſupply its place, and to procure men that ſafety, which the laws and their own innocence were not alone able to inſure to them.

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On the whole, notwithſtanding the ſeeming liberty, or rather licentiouſneſs, of the Anglo-Saxons, the great body even of the free citizens, in thoſe ages, really enjoyed much leſs true liberty than where the execution of the laws is the moſt ſevere, and where ſubjects are reduced to the ſtricteſt ſubordination and dependence on the civil magiſtrate. The reaſon is derived from the exceſs itſelf of that liberty. Men muſt guard themſelves at any price againſt inſults and injuries; and where they receive not protection from the laws and magiſtrate, they will ſeek it by ſubmiſſion to ſuperiors, and by herding in ſome private confederacy which acts under the direction of a powerful leader. And thus all anarchy is the immediate cauſe of tyranny, if not over the ſtate, at leaſt over many of the individuals.

Security was provided by the Saxon laws to all members of the Wittenagemot, both in going and returning, *except they were notorious thieves and robbers.*

The German Saxons, as the other nations of that continent, were divided into three ranks of men, the noble, the free, and the ſlaves. This diſtinction they brought over with them into Britain.

The nobles were called thanes; and were of two kinds, the king's thanes and leſſer thanes. The latter ſeem to have been dependent on the former; and to have received lands, for which they paid rent, ſervices, or attendance in peace and war. We know of no title which raiſed any one to the rank of thane, except noble birth and the poſſeſſion of land. The former was always much regarded by all the German nations, even in their moſt barbarous ſtate; and as the Saxon nobility, having little credit, could ſcarcely burthen their eſtates with much debt, and as the commons had little trade or induſtry by which they could accumulate riches, theſe two ranks of men, even though they were not ſeparated by poſitive laws, might remain long diſtinct, and the noble families continue many ages in opulence and ſplendour. There were no middle ranks of men, that could gradually mix with their ſuperiors, and inſenſibly procure to themſelves honour and diſtinction. If by any extraordi-

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nary accident a mean perſon acquired riches, a circumſtance ſo ſingular made him be known and remarked; he became the object of envy, as well as of indignation, to all the nobles; he would have great difficulty to defend what he had acquired; and he would find it impoſſible to protect himſelf from oppreſſion, except by courting the patronage of ſome great chieftain, and paying a large price for his ſafety.

There are two ſtatutes among the Saxon laws which ſeem calculated to confound thoſe different ranks of men; that of Athelſtan, by which a merchant, who had made three long ſea voyages on his own account, was entitled to the quality of thane; and that of the ſame prince, by which a ceorle or huſbandman, who had been able to purchaſe five hydes of land, and had a chapel, a kitchen, a hall, and a bell, was raiſed to the ſame diſtinction. But the opportunities were ſo few, by which a merchant or ceorle could thus exalt himſelf above his rank, that the law could never overcome the reigning prejudices; the diſtinction between noble and baſe blood would ſtill be indelible; and the well-born thanes would entertain the higheſt contempt for thoſe legal and factitious ones. Though we are not informed of any of theſe circumſtances by ancient hiſtorians, they are ſo much founded on the nature of things, that we may admit them as a neceſſary and infallible conſequence of the ſituation of the kingdom during thoſe ages.

The cities appear by Domeſday-book to have been at the conqueſt little better than villages *. York itſelf, though it was always the ſecond, at leaſt the third † city in England, and was the capital of a great province, which never was thoroughly united with the reſt,

* Wincheſter, being the capital of the Weſt-Saxon monarchy, was anciently a conſiderable city.

† Norwich contained 738 houſes, Exeter 315, Ipſwich 538, Northampton 60, Hertford 146, Canterbury 262, Bath 64, Southampton 84, Warwick 225.—See Brady of Boroughs. Theſe are the moſt conſiderable he mentions. The account of them is extracted from Domeſday-book.

contained

contained then but one thouſand four hundred and eighteen families *. Malmeſbury tells us, that the great diſtinction between the Anglo-Saxon nobility, and the French or Norman, was, that the latter built magnificent and ſtately caſtles; whereas the former conſumed their immenſe fortunes in riot and hoſpitality, and in mean houſes. We may thence infer, that the arts in general were much leſs advanced in England than in France; a greater number of idle ſervants and retainers lived about the great families; and as theſe, even in France, were powerful enough to diſturb the execution of the laws, we may judge of the authority acquired by the ariſtocracy in England. When earl Godwin beſieged the Confeſſor in London, he ſummoned from all parts his huſcarles, or houſ ceorles, and retainers, and thereby conſtrained his ſovereign to accept of the conditions which he was pleaſed to impoſe upon him.

The lower rank of freemen were denominated ceorles among the Anglo-Saxons; and, where they were induſtrious, they were chiefly employed in huſbandry: Whence a ceorle and a huſbandman became in a manner ſynonymous terms. They cultivated the farms of the nobility or thanes, for which they paid rent; and they ſeem to have been removable at pleaſure. For there is little mention of leaſes among the Anglo-Saxons: The pride of the nobility, together with the general ignorance of writing, muſt have rendered theſe contracts very rare, and muſt have kept the huſbandmen in a dependent condition. The rents of farms were then chiefly paid in kind †.

But the moſt numerous rank by far in the community ſeems to have been the ſlaves or villains, who were the

* There were ſix wards, beſides the archbiſhop's palace; and five of theſe wards contained the number of families here mentioned, which, at the rate of five perſons to a family, makes about 7000 ſouls. The ſixth ward was laid waſte.

† The laws of Ina fixed the rents for a hyde; but it is difficult to convert it into modern meaſures.

property

property of their lords, and were conſequently incapable themſelves of poſſeſſing any property. Dr. Brady aſſures us, from a ſurvey of Domeſday-book, that, in all the counties of England, the far greater part of the land was occupied by them, and that the huſbandmen, and ſtill more the ſocmen, who were tenants that could not be removed at pleaſure, were very few in compariſon. This was not the caſe with the German nations, as far as we can collect from the account given us by Tacitus. The perpetual wars in the Heptarchy, and the depredations of the Danes, ſeem to have been the cauſe of this great alteration with the Anglo-Saxons. Priſoners taken in battle, or carried off in the frequent inroads, were then reduced to ſlavery; and became, by right of war, entirely at the diſpoſal of their lords. Great property in the nobles, eſpecially if joined to an irregular adminiſtration of juſtice, naturally favours the power of the ariſtocracy; but ſtill more ſo, if the practice of ſlavery be admitted, and has become very common. The nobility not only poſſeſs the influence which always attends riches, but alſo the power which the laws give them over their ſlaves and villains. It then becomes difficult, and almoſt impoſſible, for a private man to remain altogether free and independent.

There were two kinds of ſlaves among the Anglo-Saxons; houſehold ſlaves, after the manner of the ancients; and prædial or ruſtic, after the manner of the Germans. Theſe latter reſembled the ſerfs, which are at preſent to be met with in Poland, Denmark, and ſome parts of Germany. The power of a maſter over his ſlaves was not unlimited among the Anglo-Saxons, as it was among their anceſtors. If a man beat out his ſlave's eye or teeth, the ſlave recovered his liberty: If he killed him, he paid a fine to the king; provided the ſlave died within a day after the wound or blow; Otherwiſe it paſſed unpuniſhed. The ſelling of themſelves or children to ſlavery was always the practice among the German nations, and was continued by the Anglo-Saxons.

The

The great lords and abbots among the Anglo-Saxons poſſeſſed a criminal juriſdiction within their territories, and could puniſh, without appeal, any thieves or robbers whom they caught there. This inſtitution muſt have had a very contrary effect to that which was intended, and muſt have procured robbers a ſure protection on the lands of ſuch noblemen as did not ſincerely mean to diſcourage crimes and violence.

But though the general ſtrain of the Anglo-Saxon government ſeems to have become ariſtocratical, there were ſtill conſiderable remains of the ancient democracy, which were not indeed ſufficient to protect the loweſt of the people, without the patronage of ſome great lord; but might give ſecurity, and even ſome degree of dignity, to the gentry or inferior nobility. The adminiſtration of juſtice, in particular, by the courts of the decennary, the hundred, and the county, was well calculated to defend general liberty, and to reſtrain the power of the nobles. In the county courts, or ſhiremotes, all the freeholders were aſſembled twice a year, and received appeals from the inferior courts. They there decided all cauſes, eccleſiaſtical as well as civil; and the biſhop, together with the alderman or earl, preſided over them. The affair was determined in a ſummary manner, without much pleading, formality, or delay, by a majority of voices; and the biſhop and alderman had no further authority than to keep order among the freeholders, and interpoſe with their opinion. Where juſtice was denied during three ſeſſions by the hundred, and then by the county court, there lay an appeal to the king's court; but this was not practiſed on ſlight occaſions. The aldermen received a third of the fines levied in thoſe courts; and as moſt of the puniſhments were then pecuniary, this perquiſite formed a conſiderable part of the profits belonging to his office. The two-thirds alſo, which went to the king, made no contemptible part of the public revenue. Any freeholder was fined who abſented himſelf thrice from theſe courts.

As the extreme ignorance of the age made deeds and writings very rare, the county or hundred court was the place

place where the moſt remarkable civil tranſactions were finiſhed, in order to preſerve the memory of them, and prevent all future diſputes. Here teſtaments were promulgated, ſlaves manumitted, bargains of ſale concluded; and ſometimes, for greater ſecurity, the moſt conſiderable of theſe deeds were inſerted in the blank leaves of the pariſh Bible, which thus became a kind of regiſter too ſacred to be falſified. It was not unuſual to add to the deed an imprecation on all ſuch as ſhould be guilty of that crime.

Among a people, who lived in ſo ſimple a manner as the Anglo-Saxons, the judicial power is always of greater importance than the legiſlative. There were few or no taxes impoſed by the ſtates: There were few ſtatutes enacted; and the nation was leſs governed by laws than by cuſtoms, which admitted a great latitude of interpretation. Though it ſhould, therefore, be allowed that the Wittenagemot was altogether compoſed of the principal nobility, the county-courts, where all the freeholders were admitted, and which regulated all the daily occurrences of life, formed a wide baſis for the government, and were no contemptible checks on the ariſtocracy. But there is another power ſtill more important than either the judicial or legiſlative; to wit, the power of injuring or ſerving by immediate force and violence, for which it is difficult to obtain redreſs in courts of juſtice. In all extenſive governments, where the execution of the laws is feeble, this power naturally falls into the hands of the principal nobility; and the degree of it which prevails, cannot be determined ſo much by the public ſtatutes, as by ſmall incidents in hiſtory, by particular cuſtoms, and ſometimes by the reaſon and nature of things. The Highlands of Scotland have long been entitled by law to every privilege of Britiſh ſubjects; but it was not till very lately that the common people could in fact enjoy theſe privileges.

The powers of all the members of the Anglo-Saxon government are diſputed among hiſtorians and antiquaries: The extreme obſcurity of the ſubject, even though faction had never entered into the queſtion, would naturally

turally have begotten those controversies. But the great influence of the lords over their slaves and tenants, the clientship of the burghers, the total want of a middling rank of men, the extent of the monarchy, the loose execution of the laws, the continued disorders and convulsions of the state; all these circumstances evince that the Anglo-Saxon government became at last extremely aristocratical; and the events, during the period immediately preceding the conquest, confirm this inference or conjecture.

Both the punishments inflicted by the Anglo-Saxon courts of judicature, and the methods of proof employed in all causes, appear somewhat singular, and are very different from those which prevail at present among all civilized nations.

We must conceive that the ancient Germans were little removed from the original state of nature: The social confederacy among them was more martial than civil: They had chiefly in view the means of attack or defence against public enemies, not those of protection against their fellow-citizens: Their possessions were so slender and so equal, that they were not exposed to great danger; and the natural bravery of the people made every man trust to himself, and to his particular friends, for his defence or vengeance. This defect in the political union drew much closer the knot of particular confederacies: An insult upon any man was regarded by all his relations and associates as a common injury: They were bound by honour, as well as by a sense of common interest, to revenge his death, or any violence which he had suffered: They retaliated on the aggressor by like acts of violence; and if he were protected, as was natural and usual, by his own clan, the quarrel was spread still wider, and bred endless disorders in the nation.

The Frisians, a tribe of the Germans, had never advanced beyond this wild and imperfect state of society; and the right of private revenge still remained among them unlimited and uncontrolled. But the other German nations, in the age of Tacitus, had made one step

farther towards completing the political or civil union. Though it ſtill continued to be an indiſpenſable point of honour for every clan to revenge the death or injury of a member, the magiſtrate had acquired a right of interpoſing in the quarrel, and of accommodating the difference. He obliged the perſon maimed or injured, and the relations of one killed, to accept of a preſent from the aggreſſor and his relations, as a compenſation for the injury *, and to drop all farther proſecution of revenge. That the accommodation of one quarrel might not be the ſource of more, this preſent was fixed and certain, according to the rank of the perſon killed or injured, and was commonly paid in cattle, the chief property of thoſe rude and uncultivated nations. A preſent of this kind gratified the revenge of the injured family, by the loſs which the aggreſſor ſuffered: It ſatisfied their pride, by the ſubmiſſion which it expreſſed: It diminiſhed their regret for the loſs or injury of a kinſman, by their acquiſition of new property: And thus general peace was for a moment reſtored to the ſociety †.

But when the German nations had been ſettled ſome time in the provinces of the Roman empire, they made ſtill another ſtep towards a more cultivated life, and their criminal juſtice gradually improved and refined itſelf. The magiſtrate, whoſe office it was to guard public peace, and to ſuppreſs private animoſities, conceived himſelf to be injured by every injury done to any of his people; and beſides the compenſation to the perſon who ſuffered, or to his family, he thought himſelf entitled to exact a fine called the Fridwit, as an atonement for the breach of peace, and as a reward for the pains which he had taken in accommodating the quarrel. When this idea, which is ſo natural, was once ſuggeſted, it was willingly received both by ſovereign and people. The numerous fines which were levied, augmented the reve-

* Called by the Saxons *mægbota*.

† Tacitus de Morib. Germ.—The author ſays, that the price of the compoſition was fixed; which muſt have been by the laws and the interpoſition of the magiſtrates.

nue

nue of the king: And the people were ſenſible that he would be more vigilant in interpoſing with his good offices, when he reaped ſuch immediate advantage from them; and that injuries would be leſs frequent, when, beſides compenſation to the perſon injured, they were expoſed to this additional penalty *.

This ſhort abſtract contains the hiſtory of the criminal juriſprudence of the northern nations for ſeveral centuries. The ſtate of England in this particular, during the period of the Anglo-Saxons, may be judged of by the collection of ancient laws, publiſhed by Lambard and Wilkins. The chief purport of theſe laws is not to prevent or entirely ſuppreſs private quarrels, which the legiſlator knew to be impoſſible, but only to regulate and moderate them. The laws of Alfred enjoin, that if any one know that his enemy or aggreſſor, after doing him an injury, reſolves to keep within his own houſe *and his own lands* †, he ſhall not fight him till he require compenſation for the injury. If he be ſtrong enough to beſiege him in his houſe, he may do it for ſeven days without attacking him; and if the aggreſſor be willing, during that time, to ſurrender himſelf and his arms, his adverſary may detain him thirty days; but is afterwards obliged to reſtore him ſafe to his kindred, *and be content with the compenſation*. If the criminal fly to the temple, that ſanctuary muſt not be violated. Where the aſſailant has not force ſufficient to beſiege the criminal in his houſe, he muſt apply to the alderman for aſſiſtance; and if the alderman refuſe aid, the aſſailant muſt have recourſe to the king: And he is not allowed to aſſault the houſe, till after this ſupreme magiſtrate has refuſed aſſiſtance. If any one meet with his enemy, and be ignorant that he was reſolved to keep

* Beſides paying money to the relations of the deceaſed and to the king, the murderer was alſo obliged to pay the maſter of a ſlave or vaſſal a ſum as the compenſation for his loſs. This was called the *manbote*.

† The addition of theſe laſt words in Italics appears neceſſary from what follows in the ſame law.

within his own lands, he muſt, before he attack him, require him to ſurrender himſelf priſoner, and deliver up his arms; in which caſe he may detain him thirty days: But if he refuſe to deliver up his arms, it is then lawful to fight him. A ſlave may fight in his maſter's quarrel: A father may fight in his ſon's with any one, except with his maſter.

It was enacted by king Ina, that no man ſhould take revenge for an injury till he had firſt demanded compenſation, and had been refuſed it.

King Edmond, in the preamble to his laws, mentions the general miſery occaſioned by the multiplicity of private feuds and battles; and he eſtabliſhes ſeveral expedients for remedying this grievance. He ordains that, if any one commit murder, he may, with the aſſiſtance of his kindred, pay within a twelvemonth the fine of his crime; and if they abandon him, he ſhall alone ſuſtain the deadly feud or quarrel with the kindred of the murdered perſon: His own kindred are free from the feud, but on condition that they neither converſe with the criminal, nor ſupply him with meat *or other neceſſaries*: If any of them, after renouncing him, receive him into their houſe, *or give him aſſiſtance*, they are finable to the king, and are involved in the feud. If the kindred of the murdered perſon take revenge on any but the criminal himſelf *after he is abandoned by his kindred*, all their property is forfeited, and they are declared to be enemies to the king and all his friends. It is alſo ordained, that the fine for murder ſhall never be remitted by the king; and that no criminal ſhall be killed who flies to the church, or any of the king's towns; and the king himſelf declares, that his houſe ſhall give no protection to murderers, till they have ſatisfied the church by their penance, and the kindred of the deceaſed, by making compenſation. The method appointed for tranſacting this compoſition is found in the ſame law.

Theſe attempts of Edmond, to contract and diminiſh the feuds, were contrary to the ancient ſpirit of the northern barbarians, and were a ſtep towards a more regular adminiſtration of juſtice. By the Salic law, any man

man might, by a public declaration, exempt himſelf from his family quarrels: But then he was conſidered by the law as no longer belonging to the family; and he was deprived of all right of ſucceſſion, as the puniſhment of his cowardice.

The price of the king's head, or his weregild, as it was then called, was by law 30,000 thrimſas, near 1300 pounds of preſent money. The price of the prince's head was 15,000 thrimſas; that of a biſhop's or alderman's 8000; a ſheriff's 4000; a thane's or clergyman's 2000; a ceorle's 266. Theſe prices were fixed by the laws of the Angles. By the Mercian law, the price of a ceorle's head was 200 ſhillings; that of a thane's ſix times as much; that of a king's ſix times more. By the laws of Kent, the price of the archbiſhop's head was higher than that of the king's. Such reſpect was then paid to the eccleſiaſtics! It muſt be underſtood, that where a perſon was unable or unwilling to pay the fine, he was put out of the protection of law, and the kindred of the deceaſed had liberty to puniſh him as they thought proper.

Some antiquarians have thought that theſe compenſations were only given for man-ſlaughter, not for wilful murder: But no ſuch diſtinction appears in the laws; and it is contradicted by the practice of all the other barbarous nations, by that of the ancient Germans, and by that curious monument above mentioned, of Saxon antiquity, preſerved by Hickes. There is indeed a law of Alfred's, which makes wilful murder capital *; but this ſeems only to have been an attempt of that great legiſlator towards eſtabliſhing a better police in the kingdom, and it probably remained without execution. By the laws of the ſame prince, a conſpiracy againſt the life of the king might be redeemed by a fine.

The price of all kinds of wounds was likewiſe fixed by the Saxon laws: A wound of an inch long under the

* It is probable, that by wilful murder Alfred means a treacherous murder, committed by one who has no declared feud with another.

hair, was paid with one ſhilling: One of a like ſize in the face, two ſhillings: Thirty ſhillings for the loſs of an ear; and ſo forth. There ſeems not to have been any difference made, according to the dignity of the perſon. By the laws of Ethelbert, any one who committed adultery with his neighbour's wife was obliged to pay him a fine, and buy him another wife.

Theſe inſtitutions are not peculiar to the ancient Germans. They ſeem to be the neceſſary progreſs of criminal juriſprudence among every free people, where the will of the ſoverein is not implicitly obeyed. We find them among the ancient Greeks during the time of the Trojan war. Compoſitions for murder are mentioned in Neſtor's ſpeech to Achilles in the ninth Iliad, and are called ἀποινα. The Iriſh, who never had any connections with the German nations, adopted the ſame practice till very lately; and the price of a man's head was called among them his *eric*; as we learn from Sir John Davis. The ſame cuſtom ſeems alſo to have prevailed among the Jews.

Theft and robbery were frequent among the Anglo-Saxons. In order to impoſe ſome check upon theſe crimes, it was ordained that no man ſhould ſell or buy any thing above twenty pence value, except in open market; and every bargain of ſale muſt be executed before witneſſes. Gangs of robbers much diſturbed the peace of the country; and the law determined, that a tribe of banditti, conſiſting of between ſeven and thirty-five perſons, was to be called a *turma*, or troop: Any greater company was denominated an army. The puniſhments for this crime were various, but none of them capital. If any man could track his ſtolen cattle into another's ground, the latter was obliged to ſhow the tracks out of it, or pay their value.

Rebellion, to whatever exceſs it was carried, was not capital, but might be redeemed by a ſum of money. The legiſlators, knowing it impoſſible to prevent all diſorders, only impoſed a higher fine on breaches of the peace committed in the king's court, or before an alderman or biſhop. An alehouſe too ſeems to have been conſidered

conſidered as a privileged place; and any quarrels that aroſe there were more ſeverely puniſhed than elſewhere.

If the manner of puniſhing crimes among the Anglo-Saxons appear ſingular, the proofs were not leſs ſo; and were alſo the natural reſult of the ſituation of thoſe people. Whatever we may imagine concerning the uſual truth and ſincerity of men who live in a rude and barbarous ſtate, there is much more falſehood, and even perjury, among them, than among civilized nations: Virtue, which is nothing but a more enlarged and more cultivated reaſon, never flouriſhes to any degeee, nor is founded on ſteady principles of honour, except where a good education becomes general; and where men are taught the pernicious conſequences of vice, treachery, and immorality. Even ſuperſtition, though more prevalent among ignorant nations, is but a poor ſupply for the defects in knowledge and education: Our European anceſtors, who employed every moment the expedient of ſwearing on extraordinary croſſes and reliques, were leſs honourable in all engagements than their poſterity, who, from experience, have omitted thoſe ineffectual ſecurities. This general proneneſs to perjury was much increaſed by the uſual want of diſcernment in judges, who could not diſcuſs an intricate evidence, and were obliged to number, not weigh, the teſtimony of the witneſſes*. Hence the ridiculous practice of obliging men to bring compurgators, who, as they did not pretend to know any thing of the fact, expreſſed upon oath, that they believed the perſon ſpoke true; and theſe compurgators were in ſome caſes multiplied to the number of three hundred. The practice alſo of ſingle combat was employed by moſt nations on the continent as a remedy againſt falſe evidence; and though it was frequently dropped, from the oppoſition of the

* Sometimes the laws fixed eaſy general rules for weighing the credibility of witneſſes. A man whoſe life was eſtimated at 120 ſhillings, counterbalanced ſix ceorles, each of whoſe lives was only valued at twenty ſhillings, and his oath was eſteemed equivalent to that of all the ſix.

clergy,

clergy, it was continually revived from experience of the falſehood attending the teſtimony of witneſſes. It became at laſt a ſpecies of juriſprudence: The cauſes were determined by law, in which the party might challenge his adverſary, or the witneſſes, or the judge himſelf: And though theſe cuſtoms were abſurd, they were rather an improvement on the methods of trial which had formerly been practiſed among thoſe barbarous nations, and which ſtill prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons.

When any controverſy about a fact became too intricate for thoſe ignorant judges to unravel, they had recourſe to what they called the judgment of God, that is, to fortune: Their methods of conſulting this oracle were various. One of them was the deciſion of the *croſs*: It was practiſed in this manner. When a perſon was accuſed of any crime, he firſt cleared himſelf by oath, and he was attended by eleven compurgators. He next took two pieces of wood, one of which was marked with the ſign of the croſs, and wrapping both up in wool, he placed them on the altar, or on ſome celebrated relique. After ſolemn prayers for the ſucceſs of the experiment, a prieſt, or, in his ſtead, ſome unexperienced youth, took up one of the pieces of wood, and if he happened upon that which was marked with the figure of a croſs, the perſon was pronounced innocent; if otherwiſe, guilty. This practice, as it aroſe from ſuperſtition, was aboliſhed by it in France. The emperor, Lewis the Debonnaire, prohibited that method of trial, not becauſe it was uncertain, but leſt that ſacred figure, ſays he, of the croſs ſhould be proſtituted in common diſputes and controverſies.

The ordeal was another eſtabliſhed method of trial among the Anglo-Saxons. It was practiſed either by boiling water or red-hot iron. The former was appropriated to the common people; the latter to the nobility. The water or iron was conſecrated by many prayers, maſſes, faſtings, and exorciſms; after which the perſon accuſed either took up a ſtone ſunk in the water to a certain depth, or carried the iron to a certain diſtance; and his hand being wrapped up, and the covering ſealed

for

for three days, if there appeared, on examining it, no marks of burning, he was pronounced innocent; if otherwiſe, guilty *. The trial by cold water was different: The perſon was thrown into conſecrated water; if he ſwam, he was guilty; if he ſunk, innocent. It is difficult for us to conceive how any innocent perſon could ever eſcape by the one trial, or any criminal be convicted by the other. But there was another uſage admirably calculated for allowing every criminal to eſcape who had confidence enough to try it. A conſecrated cake, called a corſned, was produced; which if the perſon could ſwallow and digeſt, he was pronounced innocent.

The feudal law, if it had place at all among the Anglo-Saxons, which is doubtful, was not certainly extended over all the landed property, and was not attended with thoſe conſequences of homage, reliefs †, worſhip, marriage, and other burdens, which were inſeparable from it in the kingdoms of the continent. As the Saxons expelled, or almoſt entirely deſtroyed the ancient Britons, they planted themſelves in this iſland on the ſame footing with their anceſtors in Germany, and found no occaſion for the feudal inſtitutions, which were calculated to maintain a kind of ſtanding army, always in readineſs to ſuppreſs any inſurrection among the conquered people. The trouble and expence of defending the ſtate in England lay equally upon all the land; and it was uſual for every five hydes to equip a man for the ſervice. The *trinoda neceſſitas*, as it was called, or the burthen of military expeditions, of repairing highways, and of building and ſupporting bridges, was inſeparable from landed property, even

* Sometimes the perſon accuſed walked barefooted over red-hot iron.

† On the death of an alderman, a greater or leſſer thane, there was a payment made to the king of his beſt arms; and this was called his heriot: But this was not of the nature of a relief. The value of this heriot was fixed by Canute's laws, § 69.

though

though it belonged to the church or monaſteries, unleſs exempted by a particular charter. The ceories or huſbandmen were provided with arms, and were obliged to take their turn in military duty. There were computed to be 243,600 hydes in England; conſequently the ordinary military force of the kingdom conſiſted of 48,720 men; though, no doubt, on extraordinary occaſions, a greater number might be aſſembled. The king and nobility had ſome military tenants, who were called Sithcun-men. And there were ſome lands annexed to the office of alderman, and to other offices; but theſe probably were not of great extent, and were poſſeſſed only during pleaſure, as in the commencement of the feudal law in other countries of Europe.

The revenue of the king ſeems to have conſiſted chiefly in his demeſnes, which were large; and in the tolls and impoſts which he probably levied at diſcretion on the boroughs and ſea-ports that lay within his demeſnes. He could not alienate any part of the crown lands, even to religious uſes, without the conſent of the ſtates. Danegelt was a land-tax of a ſhilling a hyde, impoſed by the ſtates, either for payment of the ſums exacted by the Danes, or for putting the kingdom in a poſture of defence againſt thoſe invaders.

The Saxon pound, as likewiſe that which was coined for ſome centuries after the conqueſt, was near three times the weight of our preſent money: There were forty-eight ſhillings in the pound, and five pence in a ſhilling; conſequently a Saxon ſhilling was near a fifth heavier than ours, and a Saxon penny near three times as heavy. As to the value of money in thoſe times, compared to commodities, there are ſome, though not very certain means of computation. A ſheep, by the laws of Athelſtan, was eſtimated at a ſhilling; that is, fifteen pence of our money. The fleece was two-fifths of the value of the whole ſheep; much above its preſent eſtimation; and the reaſon probably was, that the Saxons, like the ancients, were little acquainted with any clothing but what was made of wool. Silk and cotton were quite unknown: Linen was not much uſed.

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An ox was computed at ſix times the value of a ſheep; a cow at four. If we ſuppoſe that the cattle in that age, from the defects in huſbandry, were not ſo large as they are at preſent in England, we may compute that money was then near ten times of greater value. A horſe was valued at about thirty-ſix ſhillings of our money, or thirty Saxon ſhillings; a mare a third leſs. A man at three pounds: The board-wages of a child the firſt year was eight ſhillings, together with a cow's paſture in ſummer, and an ox's in winter. William of Malmeſbury mentions it as a remarkably high price that William Rufus gave fifteen marks for a horſe, or about thirty pounds of our preſent money. Between the years 900 and 1000, Ednoth bought a hyde of land for about 118 ſhillings of preſent money. This was little more than a ſhilling an acre, which indeed appears to have been the uſual price, as we may learn from other accounts. A palfrey was ſold for twelve ſhillings about the year 966. The value of an ox in king Ethelred's time was between ſeven and eight ſhillings; a cow about ſix ſhillings. Gervas of Tilbury ſays, that in Henry I.'s time, bread which would ſuffice a hundred men for a day was rated at three ſhillings, or a ſhilling of that age; for it is thought that, ſoon after the conqueſt, a pound ſterling was divided into twenty ſhillings: A ſheep was rated at a ſhilling, and ſo of other things in proportion. In Athelſtan's time a ram was valued at a ſhilling, or four pence Saxon. The tenants of Shireburn were obliged, at their choice, to pay either ſix pence, or four hens. About 1232, the abbot of St. Alban's, going on a journey, hired ſeven handſome ſtout horſes; and agreed, if any of them died on the road, to pay the owner thirty ſhillings a-piece of our preſent money. It is to be remarked, that in all ancient times the raiſing of corn, eſpecially wheat, being a ſpecies of manufactory, that commodity always bore a higher price, compared to cattle, than it does in our times. The Saxon Chronicle tells us, that in the reign of Edward the Confeſſor there was the moſt terrible famine ever known; inſomuch that a quarter of wheat roſe to

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ſixty pennies, or fifteen ſhillings of our preſent money. Conſequently it was as dear as if it now coſt ſeven pounds ten ſhillings. This much exceeds the great famine in the end of queen Elizabeth; when a quarter of wheat was ſold for four pounds. Money in this laſt period was nearly of the ſame value as in our time. Theſe ſevere famines are a certain proof of bad huſbandry.

On the whole, there are three things to be conſidered, wherever a ſum of money is mentioned in ancient times. Firſt, the change of denomination, by which a pound has been reduced to the third part of its ancient weight in ſilver. Secondly, the change in value by the greater plenty of money, which has reduced the ſame weight of ſilver to ten times leſs value, compared to commodities; and conſequently a pound ſterling to the thirtieth part of the ancient value. Thirdly, the fewer people and leſs induſtry, which were then to be found in every European kingdom. This circumſtance made even the thirtieth part of the ſum more difficult to levy, and cauſed any ſum to have more than thirty times greater weight and influence, both abroad and at home, than in our times; in the ſame manner that a ſum, a hundred thouſand pounds, for inſtance, is at preſent more difficult to levy in a ſmall ſtate, ſuch as Bavaria, and can produce greater effects on ſuch a ſmall community, than on England. This laſt difference is not eaſy to be calculated: But allowing that England has now ſix times more induſtry, and three times more people, than it had at the conqueſt, and for ſome reigns after that period, we are upon that ſuppoſition to conceive, taking all circumſtances together, every ſum of money mentioned by hiſtorians, as if it were multiplied more than a hundred-fold above a ſum of the ſame denomination at preſent.

In the Saxon times, land was divided equally among all the male children of the deceaſed, according to the cuſtom of Gavelkind. The practice of entails is to be found in thoſe times. Land was chiefly of two kinds, bocland, or land held by book or charter, which was

regarded as full property, and descended to the heirs of the possessor; and folkland, or the land held by the ceorles and common people, who were removable at pleasure, and were indeed only tenants during the will of their lords.

The first attempt which we find in England to separate the ecclesiastical from the civil jurisdiction, was that law of Edgar, by which all disputes among the clergy were ordered to be carried before the bishop. The penances were then very severe; but as a man could buy them off with money, or might substitute others to perform them, they lay easy upon the rich.

With regard to the manners of the Anglo-Saxons we can say little, but that they were in general a rude uncultivated people, ignorant of letters, unskilled in the mechanical arts, untamed to submission under law and government, addicted to intemperance, riot, and disorder. Their best quality was their military courage, which yet was not supported by discipline or conduct. Their want of fidelity to the prince, or to any trust reposed in them, appears strongly in the history of their later period; and their want of humanity in all their history. Even the Norman historians, notwithstanding the low state of the arts in their own country, speak of them as barbarians, when they mention the invasion made upon them by the duke of Normandy. The conquest put the people in a situation of receiving slowly from abroad the rudiments of science and cultivation, and of correcting their rough and licentious manners.

CHAP. IV.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

Conſequences of the battle of Haſtings—Submiſſion of the Engliſh—Settlement of the government—King's return to Normandy—Diſcontents of the Engliſh—Their inſurrections—Rigours of the Norman government—New inſurrections—New rigours of the government—Introduction of the feudal law—Innovation in eccleſiaſtical government—Inſurrection of the Norman barons—Diſpute about inveſtitures—Revolt of prince Robert—Domeſday book—The New foreſt—War with France—Death—and character of William the Conqueror.

(1066.) NOTHING could exceed the conſternation which ſeized the Engliſh, when they received intelligence of the unfortunate battle of Haſtings, the death of their king, the ſlaughter of their principal nobility and of their braveſt warriors, and the rout and diſperſion of the remainder. But though the loſs which they had ſuſtained in that fatal action was conſiderable, it might have been repaired by a great nation; where the people were generally armed, and where there reſided ſo many powerful noblemen in every province, who could have aſſembled their retainers, and have obliged the duke of Normandy to divide his army, and probably to waſte it in a variety of actions and rencounters. It was thus that the kingdom had formerly reſiſted, for many years, its invaders, and had been gradually ſubdued by the continued efforts of the Romans, Saxons, and Danes; and equal difficulties might have been apprehended by William in this bold and hazardous enterpriſe. But there were ſeveral vices in the Anglo-Saxon conſtitution, which rendered it difficult for the Engliſh to defend their liberties in ſo critical an emergency. The people had in a great meaſure loſt all national pride and ſpirit, by their recent and long ſubjection to the Danes; and as Canute had, in the

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courſe of his adminiſtration, much abated the rigours of conqueſt, and had governed them equitably by their own laws, they regarded with the leſs terror the ignominy of a foreign yoke, and deemed the inconveniencies of ſubmiſſion leſs formidable, than thoſe of bloodſhed, war, and reſiſtance. Their attachment alſo to the ancient royal family had been much weakened, by their habits of ſubmiſſion to the Daniſh princes, and by their late election of Harold, or their acquieſcence in his uſurpation. And as they had long been accuſtomed to regard Edgar Atheling, the only heir of the Saxon line, as unfit to govern them even in times of order and tranquillity; they could entertain ſmall hopes of his being able to repair ſuch great loſſes as they had ſuſtained, or to withſtand the victorious arms of the duke of Normandy.

That they might not, however, be altogether wanting to themſelves in this extreme neceſſity, the Engliſh took ſome ſteps towards adjuſting their diſjointed government, and uniting themſelves againſt the common enemy. The two potent earls, Edwin and Morcar, who had fled to London with the remains of the broken army, took the lead on this occaſion: In concert with Stigand archbiſhop of Canterbury, a man poſſeſſed of great authority and of ample revenues, they proclaimed Edgar, and endeavoured to put the people in a poſture of defence, and encourage them to reſiſt the Normans. But the terror of the late defeat, and the near neighbourhood of the invaders, increaſed the confuſion inſeparable from great revolutions; and every reſolution propoſed was haſty, fluctuating, tumultuary; diſconcerted by fear or faction, ill planned, and worſe executed.

William, that his enemies might have no leiſure to recover from their conſternation, or unite their counſels, immediately put himſelf in motion after his victory, and reſolved to proſecute an enterpriſe, which nothing but celerity and vigour could render finally ſucceſsful. His firſt attempt was againſt Romney, whoſe inhabitants he ſeverely puniſhed, on account of their cruel treatment of ſome Norman ſeamen and ſoldiers, who had been carried thither by ſtreſs of wea-

ther, or by a miſtake in their courſe: And foreſeeing that his conqueſt of England might ſtill be attended with many difficulties and with much oppoſition, he deemed it neceſſary, before he ſhould advance farther into the country, to make himſelf maſter of Dover, which would both ſecure him a retreat in caſe of adverſe fortune, and afford him a ſafe landing-place for ſuch ſupplies as might be requiſite for puſhing his advantages. The terror diffuſed by his victory at Haſtings was ſo great, that the garriſon of Dover, though numerous and well provided, immediately capitulated; and as the Normans, ruſhing in to take poſſeſſion of the town, haſtily ſet fire to ſome of the houſes, William, deſirous to conciliate the minds of the Engliſh by an appearance of lenity and juſtice, made compenſation to the inhabitants for their loſſes.

The Norman army, being much diſtreſſed with a dyſentery, was obliged to remain here eight days; but the duke, on their recovery, advanced with quick marches towards London, and by his approach increaſed the confuſions which were already ſo prevalent in the Engliſh counſels. The eccleſiaſtics in particular, whoſe influence was great over the people, began to declare in his favour; and as moſt of the biſhops and dignified clergymen were even then Frenchmen or Normans, the pope's bull, by which his enterpriſe was avowed and hallowed, was now openly inſiſted on as a reaſon for general ſubmiſſion. The ſuperior learning of thoſe prelates, which, during the Confeſſor's reign, had raiſed them above the ignorant Saxons, made their opinions be received with implicit faith; and a young prince like Edgar, whoſe capacity was deemed ſo mean, was but ill qualified to reſiſt the impreſſion which they made on the minds of the people. A repulſe which a body of Londoners received from five hundred Norman horſe, renewed in the city the terror of the great defeat at Haſtings; the eaſy ſubmiſſion of all the inhabitants of Kent was an additional diſcouragement to them; the burning of Southwark before their eyes, made them dread a like fate to their own city; and no man any longer entertained thoughts but

but of immediate ſafety and of ſelf-preſervation. Even the earls Edwin and Morcar, in deſpair of making effectual reſiſtance, retired with their troops to their own provinces; and the people thenceforth diſpoſed themſelves unanimouſly to yield to the victor. As ſoon as he paſſed the Thames at Wallingford, and reached Berkhamſtead, Stigand the primate made ſubmiſſions to him: Before he came within ſight of the city, all the chief nobility, and Edgar Atheling himſelf, the new-elected king, came into his camp, and declared their intention of yielding to his authority. They requeſted him to mount their throne, which they now conſidered as vacant; and declared to him, that as they had always been ruled by regal power, they deſired to follow, in this particular, the example of their anceſtors, and knew of no one more worthy than himſelf to hold the reins of government.

Though this was the great object to which the duke's enterpriſe tended, he feigned to deliberate on the offer; and being deſirous, at firſt, of preſerving the appearance of a legal adminiſtration, he wiſhed to obtain a more explicit and formal conſent of the Engliſh nation: But Aimar of Aquitain, a man equally reſpected for valour in the field and for prudence in council, remonſtrating with him on the danger of delay in ſo critical a conjuncture, he laid aſide all farther ſcruples, and accepted of the crown which was tendered him. Orders were immediately iſſued to prepare every thing for the ceremony of his coronation; but as he was yet afraid to place entire confidence in the Londoners, who were numerous and warlike, he meanwhile commanded fortreſſes to be erected, in order to curb the inhabitants, and to ſecure his perſon and government.

Stigand was not much in the duke's favour, both becauſe he had intruded into the ſee on the expulſion of Robert the Norman, and becauſe he poſſeſſed ſuch influence and authority over the Engliſh as migh be dangerous to a new-eſtabliſhed monarch. William, therefore, pretending that the primate had obtained his pall in an irregular manner from pope Benedict IX.

who was himself an usurper, refused to be consecrated by him, and conferred this honour on Aldred archbishop of York. Westminster abbey was the place appointed for that magnificent ceremony; the most considerable of the nobility, both English and Norman, attended the duke on this occasion (26th December); Aldred, in a short speech, asked the former whether they agreed to accept of William as their king; the bishop of Coutance put the same question to the latter; and both being answered with acclamations, Aldred administered to the duke the usual coronation oath, by which he bound himself to protect the church, to administer justice, and to repress violence: He then anointed him, and put the crown upon his head *. There appeared nothing but joy in the countenance of the spectators: But in that very moment there burst forth the strongest symptoms of the jealousy and animosity which prevailed between the nations, and which continually increased during the reign of this prince. The Norman soldiers, who were placed without, in order to guard the church, hearing the shouts within, fancied that the English were offering violence to their duke; and they immediately assaulted the populace, and set fire to the neighbouring houses. The alarm was conveyed to the nobility who surrounded the prince; both English and Normans, full of apprehensions, rushed out to secure themselves from the present danger; and it was with difficulty that William himself was able to appease the tumult.

(1067.) The king, thus possessed of the throne by a pretended destination of king Edward, and by an irregular election of the people, but still more by force of arms, retired from London to Berking in Essex; and there received the submissions of all the nobility who had not attended his coronation. Edric, surnamed the Forester, grand-nephew to that Edric so noted for his repeated

* Malmesbury says, that he also promised to govern the Normans and English by equal laws; and this addition to the usual oath seems not improbable, considering the circumstances of the times.

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acts of perfidy during the reigns of Ethelred and Edmond; earl Coxo, a man famous for bravery; even Edwin and Morcar, earls of Mercia and Northumberland; with the other principal noblemen of England, came and swore fealty to him; were received into favour, and were confirmed in the possession of their estates and dignities. Every thing bore the appearance of peace and tranquillity; and William had no other occupation than to give contentment to the foreigners who had assisted him to mount the throne, and to his new subjects, who had so readily submitted to him.

He had got possession of the treasure of Harold, which was considerable; and being also supplied with rich presents from the opulent men in all parts of England, who were solicitous to gain the favour of their new sovereign, he distributed great sums among his troops, and by this liberality gave them hopes of obtaining at length those more durable establishments which they had expected from his enterprise. The ecclesiastics, both at home and abroad, had much forwarded his success; and he failed not, in return, to express his gratitude and devotion in the manner which was most acceptable to them: He sent Harold's standard to the pope, accompanied with many valuable presents: All the considerable monasteries and churches in France, where prayers had been put up for his success, now tasted of his bounty: The English monks found him well disposed to favour their order: And he built a new convent near Hastings, which he called *Battle Abbey*, and which, on pretence of supporting monks to pray for his own soul, and for that of Harold, served as a lasting memorial of his victory *.

He introduced into England that strict execution of justice for which his administration had been much celebrated in Normandy; and even during this violent revolution, every disorder or oppression met with rigorous punishment. His army, in particular, was governed

* This convent was freed by him from all episcopal jurisdiction.

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with ſevere diſcipline; and notwithſtanding the inſolence of victory, care was taken to give as little offence as poſſible to the jealouſy of the vanquiſhed. The king appeared ſolicitous to unite, in an amicable manner, the Normans and the Engliſh, by intermarriages and alliances; and all his new ſubjects who approached his perſon were received with affability and regard. No ſigns of ſuſpicion appeared, not even towards Edgar Atheling, the heir of the ancient royal family, whom William confirmed in the honours of earl of Oxford, conferred on him by Harold, and whom he affected to treat with the higheſt kindneſs, as nephew to the Confeſſor, his great friend and benefactor. Though he confiſcated the eſtates of Harold, and of thoſe who had fought in the battle of Haſtings on the ſide of that prince, whom he repreſented as an uſurper, he ſeemed willing to admit of every plauſible excuſe for paſt oppoſition to his pretenſions, and he received many into favour who had carried arms againſt him. He confirmed the liberties and immunities of London and the other cities of England; and appeared deſirous of replacing every thing on ancient eſtabliſhments. In his whole adminiſtration he bore the ſemblance of the lawful prince, not of the conqueror; and the Engliſh began to flatter themſelves that they had changed, not the form of their government, but the ſucceſſion only of their ſovereigns, a matter which gave them ſmall concern. The better to reconcile his new ſubjects to his authority, William made a progreſs through ſome parts of England; and beſides a ſplendid court and majeſtic preſence, which overawed the people, already ſtruck with his military fame, the appearance of his clemency and juſtice gained the approbation of the wiſe, attentive to the firſt ſteps of their new ſovereign.

But amidſt this confidence and friendſhip which he expreſſed for the Engliſh, the king took care to place all real power in the hands of his Normans, and ſtill to keep poſſeſſion of the ſword, to which he was ſenſible he had owed his advancement to ſovereign authority. He diſarmed the city of London and other places, which appeared

appeared moſt warlike and populous; and building citadels in that capital, as well as in Wincheſter, Hereford, and the cities beſt ſituated for commanding the kingdom, he quartered Norman ſoldiers in all of them, and left no-where any power able to reſiſt or oppoſe him. He beſtowed the forfeited eſtates on the moſt eminent of his captains, and eſtabliſhed funds for the payment of his ſoldiers. And thus, while his civil adminiſtration carried the face of a legal magiſtrate, his military inſtitutions were thoſe of a maſter and tyrant; at leaſt of one who reſerved to himſelf, whenever he pleaſed, the power of aſſuming that character.

By this mixture, however, of vigour and lenity, he had ſo ſoothed the minds of the Engliſh, that he thought he might ſafely reviſit his native country, and enjoy the triumph and congratulation of his ancient ſubjects. He left the adminiſtration in the hands of his uterine brother, Odo biſhop of Baieux, and of William Fitz-Oſberne. That their authority might be expoſed to leſs danger, he carried over with him (March) all the moſt conſiderable nobility of England, who, while they ſerved to grace his court by their preſence and magnificent retinues, were in reality hoſtages for the fidelity of the nation. Among theſe were Edgar Atheling, Stigand the primate, the earls Edwin and Morcar, Waltheof, the ſon of the brave earl Siward, with others, eminent for the greatneſs of their fortunes and families, or for their eccleſiaſtical and civil dignities. He was viſited at the abbey of Feſcamp, were he reſided during ſome time, by Rodulph, uncle to the king of France, and by many powerful princes and nobles, who, having contributed to his enterpriſe, were deſirous of participating in the joy and advantages of its ſucceſs. His Engliſh courtiers, willing to ingratiate themſelves with their new ſovereign, outvied each other in equipages and entertainments; and made a diſplay of riches which ſtruck the foreigners with aſtoniſhment. William of Poictiers, a Norman hiſtorian, who was preſent, ſpeaks with admiration of the beauty of their perſons, the ſize and workmanſhip of their ſilver plate, the coſtlineſs

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of their embroideries, an art in which the Engliſh then excelled; and he expreſſes himſelf in ſuch terms, as tend much to exalt our idea of the opulence and cultivation of the people *. But though every thing bore the face of joy and feſtivity, and William himſelf treated his new courtiers with great appearance of kindneſs, it was impoſſible altogether to prevent the inſolence of the Normans; and the Engliſh nobles derived little ſatisfaction from thoſe entertainments, where they conſidered themſelves as led in triumph by their oſtentatious conqueror.

In England affairs took ſtill a worſe turn during the abſence of the ſovereign. Diſcontents and complaints multiplied every-where; ſecret conſpiracies were entered into againſt the government; hoſtilities were already begun in many places; and every thing ſeemed to menace a revolution, as rapid as that which had placed William on the throne. The hiſtorian above mentioned, who is a panegyriſt of his maſter, throws the blame entirely on the fickle and mutinous diſpoſition of the Engliſh, and highly celebrates the juſtice and lenity of Odo's and Fitz-Oſberne's adminiſtration. But other hiſtorians, with more probability, impute the cauſe chiefly to the Normans, who, deſpiſing a people that had ſo eaſily ſubmitted to the yoke, envying their riches, and grudging the reſtraints impoſed upon their own rapine, were deſirous of provoking them to a rebellion, by which they expected to acquire new confiſcations and forfeitures, and to gratify thoſe unbounded hopes which they had formed in entering on this enterpriſe.

It is evident, that the chief reaſon of this alteration in the ſentiments of the Engliſh, muſt be aſcribed to the departure of William, who was alone able to curb

* As the hiſtorian chiefly inſiſts on the ſilver plate, his panegyric on the Engliſh magnificence ſhows only how incompetent a judge he was of the matter. Silver was then of ten times the value, and was more than twenty times more rare than at preſent; and conſequently, of all ſpecies of luxury, plate muſt have been the rareſt.

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the violence of his captains, and to overawe the mutinies of the people. Nothing indeed appears more ſtrange, than that this prince, in leſs than three months after the conqueſt of a great, warlike, and turbulent nation, ſhould abſent himſelf, in order to reviſit his own country, which remained in profound tranquillity, and was not menaced by any of its neighbours; and ſhould ſo long leave his jealous ſubjects at the mercy of an inſolent and licentious army. Were we not aſſured of the ſolidity of his genius, and the good ſenſe diſplayed in all other circumſtances of his conduct, we might aſcribe this meaſure to a vain oſtentation, which rendered him impatient to diſplay his pomp and magnificence among his ancient ſubjects. It is therefore more natural to believe, that in ſo extraordinary a ſtep he was guided by a concealed policy; and that, though he had thought proper at firſt to allure the people to ſubmiſſion by the ſemblance of a legal adminiſtration, he found that he could neither ſatisfy his rapacious captains, nor ſecure his unſtable government, without farther exerting the rights of conqueſt, and ſeizing the poſſeſſions of the Engliſh. In order to have a pretext for this violence, he endeavoured, without diſcovering his intentions, to provoke and allure them into inſurrections, which, he thought, could never prove dangerous, while he detained all the principal nobility in Normandy, while a great and victorious army was quartered in England, and while he himſelf was ſo near to ſuppreſs any tumult or rebellion. But as no ancient writer has aſcribed this tyrannical purpoſe to William, it ſcarcely ſeems allowable, from conjecture alone, to throw ſuch an imputation upon him.

But whether we are to account for that meaſure from the king's vanity or from his policy, it was the immediate cauſe of all the calamities which the Engliſh endured during this and the ſubſequent reigns, and gave riſe to thoſe mutual jealouſies and animoſities between them and the Normans, which were never appeaſed till a long tract of time had gradually united the two nations, and made them one people. The inhabit-

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ants of Kent, who had firſt ſubmitted to the Conqueror, were the firſt that attempted to throw off the yoke; and in confederacy with Euſtace count of Bologne, who had alſo been diſguſted by the Normans, they made an attempt, though without ſucceſs, on the garriſon of Dover. Edric the Foreſter, whoſe poſſeſſions lay on the banks of the Severne, being provoked at the depredations of ſome Norman captains in his neighbourhood, formed an alliance with Blethyn and Rowallan, two Welſh princes; and endeavoured, with their aſſiſtance, to repel force by force. But though theſe open hoſtilities were not very conſiderable, the diſaffection was general among the Engliſh, who had become ſenſible, though too late, of their defenceleſs condition, and began already to experience thoſe inſults and injuries which a nation muſt always expect, that allows itſelf to be reduced to that abject ſituation. A ſecret conſpiracy was entered into to perpetrate in one day a general maſſacre of the Normans, like that which had formerly been executed upon the Danes; and the quarrel was become ſo general and national, that the vaſſals of earl Coxo, having deſired him to head them in an inſurrection, and finding him reſolute in maintaining his fidelity to William, put him to death as a traitor to his country.

The king, informed of theſe dangerous diſcontents, haſtened over to England (Dec. 6); and by his preſence, and the vigorous meaſures which he purſued, diſconcerted all the ſchemes of the conſpirators. Such of them as had been more violent in their mutiny, betrayed their guilt by flying, or concealing themſelves; and the confiſcation of their eſtates, while it increaſed the number of malcontents, both enabled William to gratify farther the rapacity of his Norman captains, and gave them the proſpect of new forfeitures and attainders. The king began to regard all his Engliſh ſubjects as inveterate and irreclaimable enemies; and thenceforth either embraced, or was more fully confirmed in the reſolution of ſeizing their poſſeſſions, and of reducing them to the moſt abject ſlavery. Though the natural violence and ſeverity of his temper made him incapable of feeling any remorſe in the

execution of this tyrannical purpoſe, he had art enough to conceal his intention, and to preſerve ſtill ſome appearance of juſtice in his oppreſſions. He ordered all the Engliſh, who had been arbitrarily expelled by the Normans during his abſence, to be reſtored to their eſtates *: But at the ſame time he impoſed a general tax on the people, that of Danegelt, which had been aboliſhed by the Confeſſor, and which had always been extremely odious to the nation.

(1068.) As the vigilance of William overawed the malcontents, their inſurrections were more the reſult of an impatient humour in the people, than of any regular conſpiracy, which could give them a rational hope of ſucceſs againſt the eſtabliſhed power of the Normans. The inhabitants of Exeter, inſtigated by Githa, mother to king Harold, refuſed to admit a Norman garriſon, and betaking themſelves to arms, were ſtrengthened by the acceſſion of the neighbouring inhabitants of Devonſhire and Cornwal. The king haſtened with his forces to chaſtiſe this revolt; and on his approach, the wiſer and more conſiderable citizens, ſenſible of the unequal conteſt, perſuaded the people to ſubmit, and to deliver hoſtages for their obedience. A ſudden mutiny of the populace broke this agreement; and William, appearing before the walls, ordered the eyes of one of the hoſtages to be put out, as an earneſt of that ſeverity which the rebels muſt expect if they perſevered in their revolt. The inhabitants were anew ſeized with terror, and ſurrendering at diſcretion, threw themſelves at the king's feet, and ſupplicated his clemency and forgiveneſs. William was not deſtitute of generoſity, when his temper was not hardened either by policy or paſſion: He was prevailed on to pardon the rebels, and he ſet guards on all the gates, in order to prevent the rapacity and inſolence of his ſoldiery. Githa eſcaped with her treaſures to Flanders. The malcontents of

* This fact is a full proof that the Normans had committed great injuſtice, and were the real cauſe of the inſurrections of the Engliſh.

Cornwal imitated the example of Exeter, and met with like treatment: And the king, having built a citadel in that city, which he put under the command of Baldwin, ſon of earl Gilbert, returned to Wincheſter, and diſperſed his army into their quarters. He was here joined by his wife Matilda, who had not before viſited England, and whom he now ordered to be crowned by archbiſhop Aldred. Soon after, ſhe brought him an acceſſion to his family by the birth of a fourth ſon, whom he named Henry. His three eldeſt ſons, Robert, Richard, and William, ſtill reſided in Normandy.

But though the king appeared thus fortunate, both in public and domeſtic life, the diſcontents of his Engliſh ſubjects augmented daily; and the injuries committed and ſuffered on both ſides, rendered the quarrel between them and the Normans abſolutely incurable. The inſolence of victorious maſters, diſperſed throughout the kingdom, ſeemed intolerable to the natives; and wherever they found the Normans, ſeparate or aſſembled in ſmall bodies, they ſecretly ſet upon them, and gratified their vengeance by the ſlaughter of their enemies. But an inſurrection in the north drew thither the general attention, and ſeemed to threaten more important conſequences. Edwin and Morcar appeared at the head of this rebellion; and theſe potent noblemen, before they took arms, ſtipulated for foreign ſuccours, from their nephew Blethyn prince of North Wales, from Malcolm king of Scotland, and from Sweyn king of Denmark. Beſides the general diſcontent which had ſeized the Engliſh, the two earls were incited to this revolt by private injuries. William, in order to inſure them to his intereſts, had, on his acceſſion, promiſed his daughter in marriage to Edwin; but either he had never ſeriouſly intended to perform this engagement, or having changed his plan of adminiſtration in England from clemency to rigour, he thought it was to little purpoſe, if he gained one family, while he enraged the whole nation. When Edwin, therefore, renewed his applications, he gave him an abſolute denial; and this diſappointment, added to ſo many other reaſons of diſguſt, induced that nobleman

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and his brother to concur with their incenſed countrymen, and to make one general effort for the recovery of their ancient liberties. William knew the importance of celerity in quelling an inſurrection, ſupported by ſuch powerful leaders, and ſo agreeable to the wiſhes of the people; and having his troops always in readineſs, he advanced by great journies to the north. On his march he gave orders to fortify the caſtle of Warwic, of which he left Henry de Beaumont governor, and that of Nottingham, which he committed to the cuſtody of William Peverell, another Norman captain. He reached York before the rebels were in any condition for reſiſtance, or were joined by any of the foreign ſuccours which they expected, except a ſmall reinforcement from Wales; and the two earls found no means of ſafety, but having recourſe to the clemency of the victor. Archil, a potent nobleman in thoſe parts, imitated their example, and delivered his ſon as a hoſtage for his fidelity; nor were the people, thus deſerted by their leaders, able to make any farther reſiſtance. But the treatment which William gave the chiefs, was very different from that which fell to the ſhare of their followers. He obſerved religiouſly the terms which he had granted to the former, and allowed them for the preſent to keep poſſeſſion of their eſtates; but he extended the rigours of his confiſcations over the latter, and gave away their lands to his foreign adventurers. Theſe, planted throughout the whole country, and in poſſeſſion of the military power, left Edwin and Morcar, whom he pretended to ſpare, deſtitute of all ſupport, and ready to fall, whenever he ſhould think proper to command their ruin. A peace which he made with Malcolm, who did him homage for Cumberland, ſeemed at the ſame time to deprive them of all proſpect of foreign aſſiſtance.

The Engliſh were now ſenſible that their final deſtruction was intended; and that inſtead of a ſovereign, whom they had hoped to gain by their ſubmiſſions, they had tamely ſurrendered themſelves, without reſiſtance, to a tyrant and a conqueror. Though the early confiſcation of Harold's followers might ſeem iniquitous; being in-

flicted on men who had never ſworn fealty to the duke of Normandy, who were ignorant of his pretenſions, and who only fought in defence of the government which they themſelves had eſtabliſhed in their own country: Yet were theſe rigours, however contrary to the ancient Saxon laws, excuſed on account of the urgent neceſſities of the prince; and thoſe who were not involved in the preſent ruin, hoped that they ſhould thenceforth enjoy, without moleſtation, their poſſeſſions and their dignities. But the ſucceſſive deſtruction of ſo many other families convinced them, that the king intended to rely entirely on the ſupport and affections of foreigners; and they foreſaw new forfeitures, attainders, and acts of violence, as the neceſſary reſult of this deſtructive plan of adminiſtration. They obſerved, that no Engliſhman poſſeſſed his confidence, or was entruſted with any command or authority; and that the ſtrangers, whom a rigorous diſcipline could have but ill reſtrained, were encouraged in their inſolence and tyranny againſt them. The eaſy ſubmiſſion of the kingdom on its firſt invaſion had expoſed the natives to contempt; the ſubſequent proofs of their animoſity and reſentment had made them the object of hatred; and they were now deprived of every expedient by which they could hope to make themſelves either regarded or beloved by their ſovereign. Impreſſed with the ſenſe of this diſmal ſituation, many Engliſhmen fled into foreign countries, with an intention of paſſing their lives abroad free from oppreſſion, or of returning on a favourable opportunity to aſſiſt their friends in the recovery of their native liberties. Edgar Atheling himſelf, dreading the inſidious careſſes of William, was perſuaded by Coſpatric, a powerful Northumbrian, to eſcape with him into Scotland; and he carried thither his two ſiſters, Margaret and Chriſtina. They were well received by Malcolm, who ſoon after eſpouſed Margaret the eldeſt ſiſter; and partly with a view of ſtrengthening his kingdom by the acceſſion of ſo many ſtrangers, partly in hopes of employing them againſt the growing power of William, he gave great countenance to all the Engliſh exiles. Many of them ſettled there; and laid

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the foundation of families which afterwards made a figure in that country.

While the Engliſh ſuffered under theſe oppreſſions, even the foreigners were not much at their eaſe; but finding themſelves ſurrounded on all hands by enraged enemies, who took every advantage againſt them, and menaced them with ſtill more bloody effects of the public reſentment, they began to wiſh again for the tranquillity and ſecurity of their native country. Hugh de Grentmeſnil, and Humphry de Teliol, though entruſted with great commands, deſired to be diſmiſſed the ſervice; and ſome others imitated their example: A deſertion which was highly reſented by the king, and which he puniſhed by the confiſcation of all their poſſeſſions in England. But William's bounty to his followers could not fail of alluring many new adventurers into his ſervice; and the rage of the vanquiſhed Engliſh ſerved only to excite the attention of the king and thoſe warlike chiefs, and keep them in readineſs to ſuppreſs every commencement of domeſtic rebellion or foreign invaſion.

(1069.) It was not long before they found occupation for their proweſs and military conduct. Godwin, Edmond, and Magnus, three ſons of Harold, had, immediately after the defeat at Haſtings, ſought a retreat in Ireland; where, having met with a kind reception from Dermot and other princes of that country, they projected an invaſion on England, and they hoped that all the exiles from Denmark, Scotland, and Wales, aſſiſted by forces from theſe ſeveral countries, would at once commence hoſtilities, and rouſe the indignation of the Engliſh againſt their haughty conquerors. They landed in Devonſhire; but found Brian, ſon of the count of Britanny, at the head of ſome foreign troops, ready to oppoſe them; and being defeated in ſeveral actions, they were obliged to retreat to their ſhips, and to return with great loſs to Ireland. The efforts of the Normans were now directed to the north, where affairs had fallen into the utmoſt confuſion. The more impatient of the Northumbrians had attacked Robert de Co-

myn, who was appointed governor of Durham; and gaining the advantage over him from his negligence, they put him to death in that city, with ſeven hundred of his followers. This ſucceſs animated the inhabitants of York, who, riſing in arms, ſlew Robert Fitz-Richard their governor; and beſieged in the caſtle William Mallet, on whom the command now devolved. A little after, the Daniſh troops landed from three hundred veſſels: Oſberne, brother to king Sweyn, was entruſted with the command of theſe forces, and he was accompanied by Harold and Canute, two ſons of that monarch. Edgar Atheling appeared from Scotland, and brought along with him Coſpatric, Waltheof, Siward, Bearne, Merleſwain, Adelin, and other leaders, who, partly from the hopes which they gave of Scottiſh ſuccours, partly from their authority in thoſe parts, eaſily perſuaded the warlike and diſcontented Northumbrians to join the inſurrection. Mallet, that he might better provide for the defence of the citadel of York, ſet fire to ſome houſes which lay contiguous; but this expedient proved the immediate cauſe of his deſtruction. The flames, ſpreading into the neighbouring ſtreets, reduced the whole city to aſhes: The enraged inhabitants, aided by the Danes, took advantage of the confuſion to attack the caſtle, which they carried by aſſault; and the garriſon, to the number of three thouſand men, was put to the ſword without mercy.

This ſucceſs proved a ſignal to many other parts of England, and gave the people an opportunity of ſhowing their malevolence to the Normans. Hereward, a nobleman in Eaſt-Anglia, celebrated for valour, aſſembled his followers, and taking ſhelter in the Iſle of Ely, made inroads on all the neighbouring country. The Engliſh in the counties of Somerſet and Dorſet roſe in arms, and aſſaulted Montacute the Norman governor; while the inhabitants of Cornwal and Devon inveſted Exeter, which from the memory of William's clemency ſtill remained faithful to him. Edric the Foreſter, calling in the aſſiſtance of the Welſh, laid ſiege to Shrewſbury, and made head againſt earl Brient and Fitz-Oſberne,

berne, who commanded in thoſe quarters. The Engliſh, every-where repenting their former eaſy ſubmiſſion, ſeemed determined to make by concert one great effort for the recovery of their liberties, and for the expulſion of their oppreſſors.

William, undiſmayed amidſt this ſcene of confuſion, aſſembled his forces, and animating them with the proſpect of new confiſcations and forfeitures, he marched againſt the rebels in the north, whom he regarded as the moſt formidable, and whoſe defeat he knew would ſtrike a terror into all the other malcontents. Joining policy to force, he tried before his approach to weaken the enemy, by detaching the Danes from them; and he engaged Oſberne, by large preſents, and by offering him the liberty of plundering the ſea-coaſt, to retire, without committing farther hoſtilities, into Denmark. Coſpatric alſo, in deſpair of ſucceſs, made his peace with the king, and paying a ſum of money as an atonement for his inſurrection, was received into favour, and even inveſted with the earldom of Northumberland. Waltheof, who long defended York with great courage, was allured with this appearance of clemency; and as William knew how to eſteem valour even in an enemy, that nobleman had no reaſon to repent of this confidence. Even Edric, compelled by neceſſity, ſubmitted to the conqueror, and received forgiveneſs, which was ſoon after followed by ſome degree of truſt and favour. Malcolm, coming too late to ſupport his confederates, was conſtrained to retire; and all the Engliſh rebels in other parts, except Hereward, who ſtill kept in his faſtneſſes, diſperſed themſelves, and left the Normans undiſputed maſters of the kingdom. Edgar Atheling, with his followers, ſought again a retreat in Scotland from the purſuit of his enemies.

(1070.) But the ſeeming clemency of William towards the Engliſh leaders proceeded only from artifice, or from his eſteem of individuals: His heart was hardened againſt all compaſſion towards the people; and he ſcrupled no meaſure, however violent or ſevere, which ſeemed requiſite to ſupport his plan of tyrannical adminiſtra-

miniſtration. Senſible of the reſtleſs diſpoſition of the Northumbrians, he determined to incapacitate them ever after from giving diſturbance, and he iſſued orders for laying entirely waſte that fertile country, which for the extent of ſixty miles lies between the Humber and the Tees. The houſes were reduced to aſhes by the mercileſs Normans; the cattle ſeized and driven away; the inſtruments of huſbandry deſtroyed; and the inhabitants compelled either to ſeek for a ſubſiſtence in the ſouthern parts of Scotland, or if they lingered in England, from a reluctance to abandon their ancient habitations, they periſhed miſerably in the woods from cold and hunger. The lives of a hundred thouſand perſons are computed to have been ſacrificed to this ſtroke of barbarous policy, which, by ſeeking a remedy for a temporary evil, thus inflicted a laſting wound on the power and populouſneſs of the nation.

But William, finding himſelf entirely maſter of a people who had given him ſuch ſenſible proofs of their impotent rage and animoſity, now reſolved to proceed to extremities againſt all the natives of England, and to reduce them to a condition in which they ſhould no longer be formidable to his government. The inſurrections and conſpiracies in ſo many parts of the kingdom, had involved the bulk of the landed proprietors, more or leſs, in the guilt of treaſon; and the king took advantage of executing againſt them, with the utmoſt rigour, the laws of forfeiture and attainder. Their lives were indeed commonly ſpared; but their eſtates were confiſcated, and either annexed to the royal demeſnes, or conferred with the moſt profuſe bounty on the Normans and other foreigners. While the king's declared intention was to depreſs, or rather entirely extirpate, the Engliſh gentry, it is eaſy to believe that ſcarcely the form of juſtice would be obſerved in theſe violent proceedings *; and that any ſuſpicions ſerved as the moſt undoubted proofs of guilt againſt a people thus devoted to deſtruction. It was crime ſufficient in an

* See note [H] at the end of the volume.

Engliſh-

Engliſhman to be opulent, or noble, or powerful; and the policy of the king, concurring with the rapacity of foreign adventurers, produced almoſt a total revolution in the landed property of the kingdom. Ancient and honourable families were reduced to beggary; the nobles themſelves were every-where treated with ignominy and contempt; they had the mortification of ſeeing their caſtles and manors poſſeſſed by Normans of the meaneſt birth and loweſt ſtations; and they found themſelves carefully excluded from every road which led either to riches or preferment *.

As power naturally follows property, this revolution alone gave great ſecurity to the foreigners; but William, by the new inſtitutions which he eſtabliſhed, took alſo care to retain for ever the military authority in thoſe hands which had enabled him to ſubdue the kingdom. He introduced into England the feudal law, which he found eſtabliſhed in France and Normandy, and which, during that age, was the foundation both of the ſtability and of the diſorders in moſt of the monarchical governments of Europe. He divided all the lands of England, with very few exceptions, beſides the royal demeſnes, into baronies; and he conferred theſe, with the reſervation of ſtated ſervices and payments, on the moſt conſiderable of his adventurers. Theſe great barons, who held immediately of the crown, ſhared out a great part of their lands to other foreigners, who were denominated knights or vaſſals, and who paid their lord the ſame duty and ſubmiſſion in peace and war, which he himſelf owed to his ſovereign. The whole kingdom contained about ſeven hundred chief tenants, and ſixty thouſand two hundred and fifteen knights-fees; and as none of the native Engliſh were admitted into the firſt rank, the few who retained their landed property were glad to be received into the ſecond, and under the protection of ſome powerful Norman, to load themſelves and their poſterity with this grievous burden, for eſtates which they had received free from their anceſtors. The ſmall mixture of

* See note [I] at the end of the volume.

Engliſh

Engliſh which entered into this civil or military fabric (for it partook of both ſpecies), was ſo reſtrained by ſubordination under the foreigners, that the Norman dominion ſeemed now to be fixed on the moſt durable baſis, and to defy all the efforts of its enemies.

The better to unite the parts of the government, and to bind them into one ſyſtem, which might ſerve both for defence againſt foreigners, and for the ſupport of domeſtic tranquillity, William reduced the eccleſiaſtical revenues under the ſame feudal law; and though he had courted the church on his invaſion and acceſſion, he now ſubjected it to ſervices which the clergy regarded as a grievous ſlavery, and as totally unbefitting their profeſſion. The biſhops and abbots were obliged, when required, to furniſh to the king, during war, a number of knights or military tenants, proportioned to the extent of property poſſeſſed by each ſee or abbey; and they were liable, in caſe of failure, to the ſame penalties which were exacted from the laity. The pope and the eccleſiaſtics exclaimed againſt this tyranny, as they called it; but the king's authority was ſo well eſtabliſhed over the army, who held every thing from his bounty, that ſuperſtition itſelf, even in that age, when it was moſt prevalent, was conſtrained to bend under his ſuperior influence.

But as the great body of the clergy were ſtill natives, the king had much reaſon to dread the effects of their reſentment: He therefore uſed the precaution of expelling the Engliſh from all the conſiderable dignities, and of advancing foreigners in their place. The partiality of the Confeſſor towards the Normans had been ſo great, that, aided by their ſuperior learning, it had promoted them to many of the ſees in England; and even before the period of the conqueſt, ſcarcely more than ſix or ſeven of the prelates were natives of the country. But among theſe was Stigand, archbiſhop of Canterbury; a man who, by his addreſs and vigour, by the greatneſs of his family and alliances, by the extent of his poſſeſſions, as well as by the dignity of his office, and his authority among the Engliſh, gave jealouſy to the king.

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Though William had on his acceſſion affronted this prelate, by employing the archbiſhop of York to officiate at his conſecration, he was careful on other occaſions to load him with honours and careſſes, and to avoid giving him farther offence till the opportunity ſhould offer of effecting his final deſtruction. The ſuppreſſion of the late rebellions, and the total ſubjection of the Engliſh, made him hope that an attempt againſt Stigand, however violent, would be covered by his great ſucceſſes, and be overlooked amidſt the other important revolutions which affected ſo deeply the property and liberty of the kingdom. Yet, notwithſtanding theſe great advantages, he did not think it ſafe to violate the reverence uſually paid to the primate, but under cover of a new ſuperſtition, which he was the great inſtrument of introducing into England.

The doctrine which exalted the papacy above all human power, had gradually diffuſed itſelf from the city and court of Rome; and was, during that age, much more prevalent in the ſouthern than in the northern kingdoms of Europe. Pope Alexander, who had aſſiſted William in his conqueſts, naturally expected that the French and Normans would import into England the ſame reverence for his ſacred character with which they were impreſſed in their own country; and would break the ſpiritual as well as civil independency of the Saxons, who had hitherto conducted their eccleſiaſtical government with an acknowledgment indeed of primacy in the ſee of Rome, but without much idea of its title to dominion or authority. As ſoon, therefore, as the Norman prince ſeemed fully eſtabliſhed on the throne, the pope diſpatched Ermenfroy biſhop of Sion, as his legate into England; and this prelate was the firſt that had ever appeared with that character in any part of the Britiſh iſlands. The king, though he was probably led by principle to pay this ſubmiſſion to Rome, determined, as is uſual, to employ the incident as a means of ſerving his political purpoſes, and of degrading theſe Engliſh prelates who were become obnoxious to him. The legate ſubmitted to become the inſtrument of his tyranny; and thought that,

that, the more violent the exertion of power, the more certainly did it confirm the authority of that court from which he derived his commiſſion. He ſummoned, therefore, a council of the prelates and abbots at Wincheſter; and being aſſiſted by two cardinals, Peter and John, he cited before him Stigand archbiſhop of Canterbury, to anſwer for his conduct. The primate was accuſed of three crimes; the holding of the ſee of Wincheſter, together with that of Canterbury; the officiating in the pall of Robert his predeceſſor; and the having received his own pall from Benedict IX. who was afterwards depoſed for ſimony, and for intruſion into the papacy. Theſe crimes of Stigand were mere pretences; ſince the firſt had been a practice not unuſual in England, and was never any-where ſubjected to a higher penalty than a reſignation of one of the ſees; the ſecond was a pure ceremonial; and as Benedict was the only pope who then officiated, and his acts were never repealed, all the prelates of the church, eſpecially thoſe who lay at a diſtance, were excuſable for making their applications to him. Stigand's ruin, however, was reſolved on, and was proſecuted with great ſeverity. The legate degraded him from his dignity: The king confiſcated his eſtate, and caſt him into priſon, where he continued in poverty and want during the remainder of his life. Like rigour was exerciſed againſt the other Engliſh prelates: Agelric biſhop of Seleſey, and Agelmare of Elmham, were depoſed by the legate, and impriſoned by the king. Many conſiderable abbots ſhared the ſame fate: Egelwin biſhop of Durham fled the kingdom: Wulſtan of Worceſter, a man of an inoffenſive character, was the only Engliſh prelate that eſcaped this general proſcription *, and remained in poſſeſſion of his dignity. Aldred

* Brompton relates, that Wulſtan was alſo deprived by the ſynod; but refuſing to deliver his paſtoral ſtaff and ring to any but the perſon from whom he firſt received it, he went immediately to king Edward's tomb, and ſtruck the ſtaff ſo deeply into the ſtone, that none but himſelf was able to

dred archbiſhop of York, who had ſet the crown on William's head, had died a little before of grief and vexation, and had left his malediction to that prince, on account of the breach of his coronation oath, and of the extreme tyranny with which he ſaw he was determined to treat his Engliſh ſubjects.

It was a fixed maxim in this reign, as well as in ſome of the ſubſequent, that no native of the iſland ſhould ever be advanced to any dignity, eccleſiaſtical, civil, or military. The king therefore, upon Stigand's depoſition, promoted Lanfranc, a Milaneſe monk, celebrated for his learning and piety, to the vacant ſee. This prelate was rigid in defending the prerogatives of his ſtation; and after a long proceſs before the pope, he obliged Thomas, a Norman monk, who had been appointed to the ſee of York, to acknowledge the primacy of the archbiſhop of Canterbury. Where ambition can be ſo happy as to cover its enterpriſes, even to the perſon himſelf, under the appearance of principle, it is the moſt incurable and inflexible of all human paſſions. Hence Lanfranc's zeal in promoting the intereſts of the papacy, by which he himſelf augmented his own authority, was indefatigable; and met with proportionable ſucceſs. The devoted attachment to Rome continually increaſed in England; and being favoured by the ſentiments of the conquerors, as well as by the monaſtic eſtabliſhments formerly introduced by Edred and by Edgar, it ſoon reached the ſame height at which it had, during ſome time, ſtood in France and Italy *. It afterwards went much farther; being favoured by that very remote ſituation, which had at firſt obſtructed its progreſs; and being leſs checked by knowledge and a

to pull it out: Upon which he was allowed to keep his biſhopric. This inſtance may ſerve, inſtead of many, as a ſpecimen of the monkiſh miracles.

* Lanfranc wrote in defence of the real preſence againſt Berengarius; and in thoſe ages of ſtupidity and ignorance, he was greatly applauded for that performance.

liberal education, which were ſtill ſomewhat more common in the ſouthern countries.

The prevalence of this ſuperſtitious ſpirit became dangerous to ſome of William's ſucceſſors, and incommodious to moſt of them: But the arbitrary ſway of this king over the Engliſh, and his extenſive authority over the foreigners, kept him from feeling any immediate inconveniences from it. He retained the church in great ſubjection, as well as his lay ſubjects; and would allow none, of whatever character, to diſpute his ſovereign will and pleaſure. He prohibited his ſubjects from acknowledging any one for pope whom he himſelf had not previouſly received: He required that all the eccleſiaſtical canons, voted in any ſynod, ſhould firſt be laid before him, and be ratified by his authority: Even bulls or letters from Rome could not legally be produced, till they received the ſame ſanction: And none of his miniſters or barons, whatever offences they were guilty of, could be ſubjected to ſpiritual cenſures till he himſelf had given his conſent to their excommunication. Theſe regulations were worthy of a ſovereign, and kept united the civil and eccleſiaſtical powers, which the principles introduced by this prince himſelf, had an immediate tendency to ſeparate.

But the Engliſh had the cruel mortification to find that their king's authority, however acquired or however extended, was all employed in their oppreſſion; and that the ſcheme of their ſubjection, attended with every circumſtance of inſult and indignity, was deliberately formed by the prince, and wantonly proſecuted by his followers. William had even entertained the difficult project of totally aboliſhing the Engliſh language; and, for that purpoſe, he ordered that in all ſchools throughout the kingdom, the youth ſhould be inſtructed in the French tongue; a practice which was continued from cuſtom till after the reign of Edward III. and was never indeed totally diſcontinued in England. The pleadings in the ſupreme courts of judicature were in French: The deeds were often drawn in the ſame language:

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The laws were compoſed in that idiom: No other tongue was uſed at court: It became the language of all faſhionable company; and the Engliſh themſelves, aſhamed of their own country, affected to excel in that foreign dialect. From this attention of William, and from the extenſive foreign dominions long annexed to the crown of England, proceeded that mixture of French which is at preſent to be found in the Engliſh tongue, and which compoſes the greateſt and beſt part of our language. But amidſt thoſe endeavours to depreſs the Engliſh nation, the king, moved by the remonſtrances of ſome of his prelates, and by the earneſt deſires of the people, reſtored a few of the laws of king Edward; which, though ſeemingly of no great importance towards the protection of general liberty, gave them extreme ſatisfaction, as a memorial of their ancient government, and an unuſual mark of complaiſance in their imperious conquerors *.

(1071.) The ſituation of the two great earls, Morcar and Edwin, became now very diſagreeable. Though they had retained their allegiance during this general inſurrection of their countrymen, they had not gained the king's confidence, and they found themſelves expoſed to the malignity of the courtiers, who envied them on account of their opulence and greatneſs, and at the ſame time involved them in that general contempt which they entertained for the Engliſh. Senſible that they had entirely loſt their dignity, and could not even hope to remain long in ſafety; they determined, though too late, to ſhare the ſame fate with their countrymen. While Edwin retired to his eſtate in the north, with a view of commencing an inſurrection, Morcar took ſhelter in the Iſle of Ely with the brave Hereward, who, ſecured by the inacceſſible ſituation of the place, ſtill defended himſelf againſt the Normans. But this attempt ſerved only to accelerate the ruin of the few Engliſh, who had hitherto been able to preſerve their rank or fortune during the paſt convulſions. William employed all his

* See note [K] at the end of the volume.

endeavours to ſubdue the Iſle of Ely; and having ſurrounded it with flat-bottomed boats, and made a cauſeway through the moraſſes to the extent of two miles, he obliged the rebels to ſurrender at diſcretion. Hereward alone forced his way, ſword in hand, through the enemy; and ſtill continued his hoſtilities by ſea againſt the Normans, till at laſt William, charmed with his bravery, received him into favour, and reſtored him to his eſtate. Earl Morcar, and Egelwin biſhop of Durham, who had joined the malcontents, were thrown into priſon, and the latter ſoon after died in confinement. Edwin, attempting to make his eſcape into Scotland, was betrayed by ſome of his followers, and was killed by a party of Normans, to the great affliction of the Engliſh, and even to that of William, who paid a tribute of generous tears to the memory of this gallant and beautiful youth. The king of Scotland, in hopes of profiting by theſe convulſions, had fallen upon the northern counties; but on the approach of William he retired; and when the king entered his country, he was glad to make peace, and to pay the uſual homage to the Engliſh crown. To complete the king's proſperity, Edgar Atheling himſelf, deſpairing of ſucceſs, and weary of a fugitive life, ſubmitted to his enemy; and receiving a decent penſion for his ſubſiſtence, was permitted to live in England unmoleſted. But theſe acts of generoſity towards the leaders were diſgraced, as uſual, by William's rigour againſt the inferior malcontents. He ordered the hands to be lopt off, and the eyes to be put out, of many of the priſoners whom he had taken in the Iſle of Ely; and he diſperſed them in that miſerable condition throughout the country, as monuments of his ſeverity.

(1073.) The province of Maine in France had, by the will of Herbert the laſt count, fallen under the dominion of William ſome years before his conqueſt of England; but the inhabitants, diſſatisfied with the Norman government, and inſtigated by Fulk count of Anjou, who had ſome pretenſions to the ſucceſſion, now roſe in rebellion, and expelled the magiſtrates whom the king had

had placed over them. The full ſettlement of England afforded him leiſure to puniſh this inſult on his authority; but being unwilling to remove his Norman forces from this iſland, he carried over a conſiderable army, compoſed almoſt entirely of Engliſh; and joining them to ſome troops levied in Normandy, he entered the revolted province. The Engliſh appeared ambitious of diſtinguiſhing themſelves on this occaſion, and of retrieving that character of valour which had long been national among them; but which their late eaſy ſubjection under the Normans had ſomewhat degraded and obſcured. Perhaps too they hoped that, by their zeal and activity, they might recover the confidence of their ſovereign, as their anceſtors had formerly, by like means, gained the affections of Canute; and might conquer his inveterate prejudices in favour of his own countrymen. The king's military conduct, ſeconded by theſe brave troops, ſoon overcame all oppoſition in Maine: The inhabitants were obliged to ſubmit, and the count of Anjou relinquiſhed his pretenſions.

(1074.) But during theſe tranſactions the government of England was greatly diſturbed; and that too by thoſe very foreigners who owed every thing to the king's bounty, and who were the ſole object of his friendſhip and regard. The Norman barons, who had engaged with their duke in the conqueſt of England, were men of the moſt independent ſpirit; and though they obeyed their leader in the field, they would have regarded with diſdain the richeſt acquiſitions, had they been required in return to ſubmit, in their civil government, to the arbitrary will of one man. But the imperious character of William, encouraged by his abſolute dominion over the Engliſh, and often impelled by the neceſſity of his affairs, had prompted him to ſtretch his authority over the Normans themſelves beyond what the free genius of that victorious people could eaſily bear. The diſcontents were become general among thoſe haughty nobles; and even Roger earl of Hereford, ſon and heir of Fitz-Oſberne, the king's chief favourite, was ſtrongly infected with them. This nobleman, intending to

marry his ſiſter to Ralph de Guader, earl of Norfolk, had thought it his duty to inform the king of his purpoſe, and to deſire the royal conſent; but meeting with a refuſal, he proceeded nevertheleſs to complete the nuptials, and aſſembled all his friends, and thoſe of Guader, to attend the ſolemnity. The two earls, diſguſted by the denial of their requeſt, and dreading William's reſentment for their diſobedience, here prepared meaſures for a revolt; and during the gaiety of the feſtival, while the company was heated with wine, they opened the deſign to their gueſts. They inveighed againſt the arbitrary conduct of the king; his tyranny over the Engliſh, whom they affected on this occaſion to commiſerate; his imperious behaviour to his barons of the nobleſt birth; and his apparent intention of reducing the victors and the vanquiſhed to a like ignominious ſervitude. Amidſt their complaints, the indignity of ſubmitting to a baſtard * was not forgotten; the certain proſpect of ſucceſs in a revolt, by the aſſiſtance of the Danes and the diſcontented Engliſh, was inſiſted on; and the whole company, inflamed with the ſame ſentiments, and warmed by the jollity of the entertainment, entered, by a ſolemn engagement, into the deſign of ſhaking off the royal authority. Even earl Waltheof, who was preſent, inconſiderately expreſſed his approbation of the conſpiracy, and promiſed his concurrence towards its ſucceſs.

This nobleman, the laſt of the Engliſh who, for ſome generations, poſſeſſed any power or authority, had, after his capitulation at York, been received into favour by the Conqueror; had even married Judith, niece to that prince; and had been promoted to the earldoms of Huntingdon and Northampton. Coſpatric earl of Northumberland, having, on ſome new diſguſt from William, retired into Scotland, where he received the earldom of Dunbar from the bounty of Malcolm,

* William was ſo little aſhamed of his birth, that he aſſumed the appellation of Baſtard in ſome of his letters and charters.

Waltheof

Waltheof was appointed his ſucceſſor in that important command, and ſeemed ſtill to poſſeſs the confidence and friendſhip of his ſovereign. But as he was a man of generous principles, and loved his country, it is probable that the tyranny exerciſed over the Engliſh lay heavy upon his mind, and deſtroyed all the ſatisfaction which he could reap from his own grandeur and advancement. When a proſpect, therefore, was opened of retrieving their liberty, he haſtily embraced it; while the fumes of the liquor, and the ardour of the company, prevented him from reflecting on the conſequences of that raſh attempt. But after his cool judgment returned, he foreſaw, that the conſpiracy of thoſe diſcontented barons was not likely to prove ſucceſsful againſt the eſtabliſhed power of William; or if it did, that the ſlavery of the Engliſh, inſtead of being alleviated by that event, would become more grievous under a multitude of foreign leaders, factious and ambitious, whoſe union and whoſe diſcord would be equally oppreſſive to the people. Tormented with theſe reflections, he opened his mind to his wife Judith, of whoſe fidelity he entertained no ſuſpicion; but who, having ſecretly fixed her affections on another, took this opportunity of ruining her eaſy and credulous huſband. She conveyed intelligence of the conſpiracy to the king, and aggravated every circumſtance, which, ſhe believed, would tend to incenſe him againſt Waltheof, and render him abſolutely implacable. Meanwhile the earl, ſtill dubious with regard to the part which he ſhould act, diſcovered the ſecret in confeſſion to Lanfranc, on whoſe probity and judgment he had a great reliance: He was perſuaded by the prelate, that he owed no fidelity to thoſe rebellious barons, who had by ſurpriſe gained his conſent to a crime; that his firſt duty was to his ſovereign and benefactor, his next to himſelf and his family; and that if he ſeized not the opportunity of making atonement for his guilt by revealing it, the temerity of the conſpirators was ſo great, that they would give ſome other perſon the means of acquiring the merit of the diſcovery. Waltheof, convinced by theſe arguments, went over to Normandy; but though he was well

well received by the king, and thanked for his fidelity, the account, previously tranſmitted by Judith, had ſunk deep into William's mind, and had deſtroyed all the merit of her huſband's repentance.

The conſpirators, hearing of Waltheof's departure, immediately concluded their deſign to be betrayed; and they flew to arms before their ſchemes were ripe for execution, and before the arrival of the Danes, in whoſe aid they placed their chief confidence. The earl of Hereford was checked by Walter de Lacy, a great baron in thoſe parts, who, ſupported by the biſhop of Worceſter and the abbot of Eveſham, raiſed ſome forces, and prevented the earl from paſſing the Severne, or advancing into the heart of the kingdom. The earl of Norfolk was defeated at Fagadun, near Cambridge, by Odo, the regent, aſſiſted by Richard de Bienfaite and William de Warrenne, the two juſticiaries. The priſoners taken in this action had their right foot cut off, as a puniſhment of their treaſon: The earl himſelf eſcaped to Norwich, thence to Denmark; where the Daniſh fleet, which had made an unſucceſsful attempt upon the coaſt of England, ſoon after arrived, and brought him intelligence, that all his confederates were ſuppreſſed, and were either killed, baniſhed, or taken priſoners *. Ralph retired in deſpair to Britanny, where he poſſeſſed a large eſtate and extenſive juriſdictions.

The king, who haſtened over to England in order to ſuppreſs the inſurrection, found that nothing remained but the puniſhment of the criminals, which he executed with great ſeverity. Many of the rebels were hanged; ſome had their eyes put out; others their hands cut off. But William, agreeably to his uſual maxims, ſhowed more lenity to their leader, the earl of Hereford, who was only condemned to a forfeture of his eſtate, and to

* Many of the fugitive Normans are ſuppoſed to have fled into Scotland; where they were protected, as well as the fugitive Engliſh, by Malcolm. Whence come the many French and Norman families which are found at preſent in that country.

impriſon-

impriſonment during pleaſure. The king ſeemed even diſpoſed to remit this laſt part of the puniſhment; had not Roger, by a freſh inſolence, provoked him to render his confinement perpetual. But Waltheof, being an Engliſhman, was not treated with ſo much humanity (1075); though his guilt, always much inferior to that of the other conſpirators, was atoned for by an early repentance and return to his duty. William, inſtigated by his niece, as well as by his rapacious courtiers, who longed for ſo rich a forfeiture, ordered him to be tried, condemned, and executed (29th April). The Engliſh, who conſidered this nobleman as the laſt reſource of their nation, grievouſly lamented his fate, and fancied that miracles were wrought by his reliques, as a teſtimony of his innocence and ſanctity. The infamous Judith, falling ſoon after under the king's diſpleaſure, was abandoned by all the world, and paſſed the reſt of her life in contempt, remorſe, and miſery.

Nothing remained to complete William's ſatisfaction but the puniſhment of Ralph de Guader; and he haſtened over to Normandy, in order to gratify his vengeance on that criminal. But though the conteſt ſeemed very unequal between a private nobleman and the king of England, Ralph was ſo well ſupported both by the earl of Britanny and the king of France, that William, after beſieging him for ſome time in Dol, was obliged to abandon the enterpriſe, and make with thoſe powerful princes a peace, in which Ralph himſelf was included. England, during his abſence, remained in tranquillity; and nothing remarkable occurred, except two eccleſiaſtical ſynods which were ſummoned, one at London, another at Wincheſter. In the former, the precedency among the epiſcopal ſees was ſettled, and the ſeat of ſome of them was removed from ſmall villages to the moſt conſiderable town within the dioceſe. In the ſecond was tranſacted a buſineſs of more importance.

(1076.) The induſtry and perſeverance are ſurpriſing, with which the popes had been treaſuring up powers and pretenſions during ſo many ages of ignorance; while

while each pontiff employed every fraud for advancing purpoſes of imaginary piety, and cheriſhed all claims which might turn to the advantage of his ſucceſſors, though he himſelf could not expect ever to reap any benefit from them. All this immenſe ſtore of ſpiritual and civil authority was now devolved on Gregory VII. of the name of Hildebrand, the moſt enterpriſing pontiff that had ever filled that chair, and the leaſt reſtrained by fear, decency, or moderation. Not content with ſhaking off the yoke of the emperors, who had hitherto exerciſed the power of appointing the pope on every vacancy, at leaſt of ratifying his election, he undertook the arduous taſk of entirely diſjoining the eccleſiaſtical from the civil power, and of excluding profane laymen from the right which they had aſſumed, of filling the vacancies of biſhoprics, abbeys, and other ſpiritual dignities. The ſovereigns, who had long exerciſed this power, and who had acquired it, not by encroachments on the church, but on the people, to whom it originally belonged, made great oppoſition to this claim of the court of Rome; and Henry IV. the reigning emperor, defended this prerogative of his crown with a vigour and reſolution ſuitable to its importance. The few offices, either civil or military, which the feudal inſtitutions left the ſovereign the power of beſtowing, made the prerogative of conferring the paſtoral ring and ſtaff the moſt valuable jewel of the royal diadem; eſpecially as the general ignorance of the age beſtowed a conſequence on the eccleſiaſtical offices, even beyond the great extent of power and property which belonged to them. Superſtition, the child of ignorance, inveſted the clergy with an authority almoſt ſacred; and as they ingroſſed the little learning of the age, their interpoſition became requiſite in all civil buſineſs, and a real uſefulneſs in common life was thus ſuperadded to the ſpiritual ſanctity of their character.

When the uſurpations, therefore, of the church had come to ſuch maturity as to embolden her to attempt extorting the right of inveſtitures from the temporal power, Europe, eſpecially Italy and Germany, was thrown into the

the moſt violent convulſions, and the pope and the emperor waged implacable war on each other. Gregory dared to fulminate the ſentence of excommunication againſt Henry and his adherents, to pronounce him rightfully depoſed, to free his ſubjects from their oaths of allegiance; and, inſtead of ſhocking mankind by this groſs encroachment on the civil authority, he found the ſtupid people ready to ſecond his moſt exorbitant pretenſions. Every miniſter, ſervant, or vaſſal of the emperor, who received any diſguſt, covered his rebellion under the pretence of principle; and even the mother of this monarch, forgetting all the ties of nature, was ſeduced to countenance the inſolence of his enemies. Princes themſelves, not attentive to the pernicious conſequences of thoſe papal claims, employed them for their preſent purpoſes: And the controverſy, ſpreading into every city of Italy, engendered the parties of Guelf and Ghibbelin; the moſt durable and moſt inveterate factions that ever aroſe from the mixture of ambition and religious zeal. Beſides numberleſs aſſaſſinations, tumults, and convulſions, to which they gave riſe, it is computed that the quarrel occaſioned no leſs than ſixty battles in the reign of Henry IV. and eighteen in that of his ſucceſſor, Henry V. when the claims of the ſovereign pontiff finally prevailed.

But the bold ſpirit of Gregory, not diſmayed with the vigorous oppoſition which he met with from the emperor, extended his uſurpations all over Europe; and well knowing the nature of mankind, whoſe blind aſtoniſhment ever inclines them to yield to the moſt impudent pretenſions, he ſeemed determined to ſet no bounds to the ſpiritual, or rather temporal monarchy, which he had undertaken to erect. He pronounced the ſentence of excommunication againſt Nicephorus emperor of the eaſt; Robert Guiſcard, the adventurous Norman who had acquired the dominion of Naples, was attacked by the ſame dangerous weapon: He degraded Boleſlas, king of Poland, from the rank of king; and even deprived Poland of the title of a kingdom: He attempted to treat Philip king of France with the ſame rigour which

which he had employed againſt the emperor: He pretended to the entire property and dominion of Spain; and he parcelled it out amongſt adventurers, who undertook to conquer it from the Saracens, and to hold it in vaſſalage under the ſee of Rome: Even the Chriſtian biſhops, on whoſe aid he relied for ſubduing the temporal princes, ſaw that he was determined to reduce them to ſervitude; and by aſſuming the whole legiſlative and judicial power of the church, to centre all authority in the ſovereign pontiff.

William the Conqueror, the moſt potent, the moſt haughty, and the moſt vigorous prince in Europe, was not, amidſt all his ſplendid ſucceſſes, ſecure from the attacks of this enterpriſing pontiff. Gregory wrote him a letter, requiring him to fulfil his promiſe in doing homage for the kingdom of England to the ſee of Rome, and to ſend him over that tribute, which all his predeceſſors had been accuſtomed to pay to the vicar of Chriſt. By the tribute, he meant Peter's pence; which, though at firſt a charitable donation of the Saxon princes, was interpreted, according to the uſual practice of the Romiſh court, to be a badge of ſubjection acknowledged by the kingdom. William replied, that the money ſhould be remitted as uſual; but that neither had he promiſed to do homage to Rome, nor was it in the leaſt his purpoſe to impoſe that ſervitude on his ſtate. And the better to ſhow Gregory his independence, he ventured, notwithſtanding the frequent complaints of the pope, to refuſe to the Engliſh biſhops the liberty of attending a general council which that pontiff had ſummoned againſt his enemies.

But though the king diſplayed this vigour in ſupporting the royal dignity, he was infected with the general ſuperſtition of the age, and he did not perceive the ambitious ſcope of thoſe inſtitutions, which, under colour of ſtrictneſs in religion, were introduced or promoted by the court of Rome. Gregory, while he was throwing all Europe into combuſtion by his violence and impoſtures, affected an anxious care for the purity of manners; and even the chaſte pleaſures of the marriage-bed were inconſiſtent,

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in his opinion, with the ſanctity of the ſacerdotal character. He had iſſued a decree prohibiting the marriage of prieſts, excommunicating all clergymen who retained their wives, declaring ſuch unlawful commerce to be fornication, and rendering it criminal in the laity to attend divine worſhip when ſuch profane prieſts officiated at the altar. This point was a great object in the politics of the Roman pontiffs; and it coſt them infinitely more pains to eſtabliſh it, than the propagation of any ſpeculative abſurdity which they had ever attempted to introduce. Many ſynods were ſummoned in different parts of Europe, before it was finally ſettled; and it was there conſtantly remarked, that the younger clergymen complied cheerfully with the pope's decrees in this particular, and that the chief reluctance appeared in thoſe who were more advanced in years: An event ſo little conſonant to men's natural expectations, that it could not fail to be gloſſed on, even in that blind and ſuperſtitious age. William allowed the pope's legate to aſſemble, in his abſence, a ſynod at Wincheſter, in order to eſtabliſh the celibacy of the clergy; but the church of England could not yet be carried the whole length expected. The ſynod was content with decreeing, that the biſhops ſhould not thenceforth ordain any prieſts or deacons without exacting from them a promiſe of celibacy; but they enacted, that none, except thoſe who belonged to collegiate or cathedral churches, ſhould be obliged to ſeparate from their wives.

The king paſſed ſome years in Normandy; but his long reſidence there was not entirely owing to his declared preference of that dutchy: His preſence was alſo neceſſary for compoſing thoſe diſturbances which had ariſen in that favourite territory, and which had even originally proceeded from his own family. Robert, his eldeſt ſon, ſurnamed Gambaron or Courthoſe, from his ſhort legs, was a prince who inherited all the bravery of his family and nation; but without that policy and diſſimulation, by which his father was ſo much diſtinguiſhed, and which, no leſs than his military valour, had contributed to his great ſucceſſes. Greedy of fame, impatient of contra-

diction, without reserve in his friendships, declared in his enmities, this prince could endure no control even from his imperious father, and openly aspired to that independence, to which his temper, as well as some circumstances in his situation, strongly invited him. When William first received the submissions of the province of Maine, he had promised the inhabitants that Robert should be their prince; and before he undertook the expedition against England, he had, on the application of the French court, declared him his successor in Normandy, and had obliged the barons of that dutchy to do him homage as their future sovereign. By this artifice, he had endeavoured to appease the jealousy of his neighbours, as affording them a prospect of separating England from his dominions on the continent; but when Robert demanded of him the execution of those engagements, he gave him an absolute refusal, and told him, according to the homely saying, that he never intended to throw off his clothes, till he went to bed. Robert openly declared his discontent; and was suspected of secretly instigating the king of France and the earl of Britanny to the opposition which they made to William, and which had formerly frustrated his attempts upon the town of Dol. And as the quarrel still augmented, Robert proceeded to entertain a strong jealousy of his two surviving brothers, William and Henry (for Richard was killed in hunting, by a stag), who, by greater submission and complaisance, had acquired the affections of their father. In this disposition on both sides, the greatest trifle sufficed to produce a rupture between them.

The three princes, residing with their father in the castle of l'Aigle in Normandy, were one day engaged in sport together; and after some mirth and jollity, the two younger took a fancy of throwing over some water on Robert as he passed through the court on leaving their apartment; a frolic, which he would naturally have regarded as innocent, had it not been for the suggestions of Alberic de Grentmesnil, son of that Hugh de Grentmesnil, whom William had formerly deprived of his fortunes, when that baron deserted him during his

gerateſt difficulties in England. The young man, mindful of the injury, perſuaded the prince that this action was meant as a public affront, which it behoved him in honour to reſent; and the choleric Robert, drawing his ſword, ran up ſtairs, with an intention of taking revenge on his brothers. The whole caſtle was filled with tumult, which the king himſelf, who haſtened from his apartment, found ſome difficulty to appeaſe. But he could by no means appeaſe the reſentment of his eldeſt ſon, who complaining of his partiality, and fancying that no proper atonement had been made him for the inſult, left the court that very evening, and haſtened to Roüen, with an intention of ſeizing the citadel of that place. But being diſappointed in this view by the precaution and vigilance of Roger de Ivery, the governor, he fled to Hugh de Neufchatel, a powerful Norman baron, who gave him protection in his caſtles; and he openly levied war againſt his father. The popular character of the prince, and a ſimilarity of manners, engaged all the young nobility of Normandy and Maine, as well as of Anjou and Britanny, to take part with him; and it was ſuſpected, that Matilda, his mother, whoſe favourite he was, ſupported him in his rebellion by ſecret remittances of money, and by the encouragement which ſhe gave his partiſans.

(1079.) All the hereditary provinces of William, as well as his family, were, during ſeveral years, thrown into convulſions by this war; and he was at laſt obliged to have recourſe to England, where that ſpecies of military government which he had eſtabliſhed gave him greater authority than the ancient feudal inſtitutions permitted him to exerciſe in Normandy. He called over an army of Engliſh under his ancient captains, who ſoon expelled Robert and his adherents from their retreats, and reſtored the authority of the ſovereign in all his dominions. The young prince was obliged to take ſhelter in the caſtle of Gerberoy in the Beauvoiſis, which the king of France, who ſecretly fomented all theſe diſſenſions, had provided for him. In this fortreſs

he was closely besieged by his father, against whom, having a strong garrison, he made an obstinate defence. There passed under the walls of this place many recounters, which resembled more the single combats of chivalry, than the military actions of armies; but one of them was remarkable for its circumstances and its event. Robert happened to engage the king, who was concealed by his helmet; and both of them being valiant, a fierce combat ensued, till at last the young prince wounded his father in the arm, and unhorsed him. On his calling out for assistance, his voice discovered him to his son, who, struck with remorse for his past guilt, and astonished with the apprehensions of one much greater, which he had so nearly incurred, instantly threw himself at his father's feet, craved pardon for his offences, and offered to purchase forgiveness by any atonement. The resentment harboured by William was so implacable, that he did not immediately correspond to this dutiful submission of his son with like tenderness; but giving him his malediction, departed for his own camp, on Robert's horse, which that prince had assisted him to mount. He soon after raised the siege, and marched with his army to Normandy; where the interposition of the queen, and other common friends, brought about a reconcilement, which was probably not a little forwarded by the generosity of the son's behaviour in this action, and by the returning sense of his past misconduct. The king seemed so fully appeased, that he even took Robert with him into England; where he intrusted him with the command of an army, in order to repel an inroad of Malcolm king of Scotland, and to retaliate by a like inroad into that country. The Welsh, unable to resist William's power, were, about the same time, necessitated to pay a compensation for their incursions; and every thing was reduced to full tranquillity in this island.

(1081.) This state of affairs gave William leisure to begin and finish an undertaking, which proves his extensive genius, and does honour to his memory: It was a general survey of all the lands in the kingdom, their extent

VOLUME I. page 258.
William the Conqueror's Malediction
of his Son Robert.

Engraved for J. Parsons, Paternoster Row. May 1794.

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tent in each diſtrict, their proprietors, tenures, value; the quantity of meadow, paſture, wood, and arable land, which they contained; and in ſome counties the number of tenants, cottagers, and ſlaves of all denominations, who lived upon them. He appointed commiſſioners for this purpoſe, who entered every particular in their regiſter by the verdict of juries; and after a labour of ſix years (for the work was ſo long in finiſhing) brought him an exact account of all the landed property of his kingdom*. This monument, called Domeſday-book, the moſt valuable piece of antiquity poſſeſſed by any nation, is ſtill preſerved in the Exchequer; and though only ſome extracts of it have hitherto been publiſhed, it ſerves to illuſtrate to us, in many particulars, the ancient ſtate of England. The great Alfred had finiſhed a like ſurvey of the kingdom in his time, which was long kept at Wincheſter, and which probably ſerved as a model to William in this undertaking.

The king was naturally a great œconomiſt; and though no prince had ever been more bountiful to his officers and ſervants, it was merely becauſe he had rendered himſelf univerſal proprietor of England, and had a whole kingdom to beſtow. He reſerved an ample revenue for the crown; and in the general diſtribution of land among his followers, he kept poſſeſſion of no leſs than fourteen hundred and twenty-two manors in different parts of England, which paid him rent, either in money, or in corn, cattle, and the uſual produce of the ſoil. An ancient hiſtorian computes, that his annual fixed income, beſides eſcheats, fines, reliefs, and other caſual profits to a great value, amounted to near 400,000 pounds a year †; a ſum which, if all circumſtances be attended to, will appear wholly incredible. A pound in that age, as we have already obſerved, contained three

* The more northern counties were not comprehended in this ſurvey; I ſuppoſe becauſe of their wild, uncultivated ſtate.

† Ordericus Vitalis, p. 523. He ſays 1060 pounds and ſome odd ſhillings and pence a day.

times the weight of ſilver that it does at preſent; and the ſame weight of ſilver, by the moſt probable computation, would purchaſe near ten times more of the neceſſaries of life, though not in the ſame proportion of the finer manufactures. This revenue, therefore, of William would be equal to at leaſt nine or ten millions at preſent; and as that prince had neither fleet nor army to ſupport, the former being only an occaſional expenſe, and the latter being maintained, without any charge to him, by his military vaſſals, we muſt thence conclude, that no emperor or prince, in any age or nation, can be compared to the Conqueror for opulence and riches. This leads us to ſuſpect a great miſtake in the computation of the hiſtorian; though, if we conſider that avarice is always imputed to William, as one of his vices, and that having by the ſword rendered himſelf maſter of all the lands in the kingdom, he would certainly in the partition retain a great proportion for his own ſhare; we can ſcarcely be guilty of any error in aſſerting, that perhaps no king of England was ever more opulent, was more able to ſupport, by his revenue, the ſplendour and magnificence of a court, or could beſtow more on his pleaſures, or in liberalities to his ſervants and favourites.

There was one pleaſure, to which William, as well as all the Normans and ancient Saxons, was extremely addicted, and that was hunting: But this pleaſure he indulged more at the expenſe of his unhappy ſubjects, whoſe intereſts he always diſregarded, than to the loſs or diminution of his own revenue. Not content with thoſe large foreſts, which former kings poſſeſſed in all parts of England; he reſolved to make a new foreſt near Winchester, the uſual place of his reſidence: And for that purpoſe, he laid waſte the country in Hampſhire for an extent of thirty miles, expelled the inhabitants from their houſes, ſeized their property, even demoliſhed churches and convents, and made the ſufferers no compenſation for the injury. At the ſame time, he enacted new laws, by which he prohibited all his ſubjects from hunting in any of his foreſts, and rendered the penalties more

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ſevere than ever had been inflicted for ſuch offences. The killing of a deer or boar, or even a hare, was puniſhed with the loſs of the delinquent's eyes; and that at a time when the killing of a man could be atoned for by paying a moderate fine or compoſition.

The tranſactions recorded during the remainder of this reign, may be conſidered more as domeſtic occurrences, which concern the prince, than as national events, which regard England. Odo biſhop of Baieux, the king's uterine brother, whom he had created earl of Kent, and entruſted with a great ſhare of power during his whole reign, had amaſſed immenſe riches; and agreeably to the uſual progreſs of human wiſhes, he began to regard his preſent acquiſitions but as a ſtep to farther grandeur. He had formed the chimerical project of buying the papacy; and though Gregory, the reigning pope, was not of advanced years, the prelate had confided ſo much in the predictions of an aſtrologer, that he reckoned upon the pontiff's death, and upon attaining, by his own intrigues and money, that envied ſtate of greatneſs. Reſolving, therefore, to remit all his riches to Italy, he had perſuaded many conſiderable barons, and, among the reſt, Hugh earl of Cheſter, to take the ſame courſe; in hopes that, when he ſhould mount the papal throne, he would beſtow on them more conſiderable eſtabliſhments in that country. The king, from whom all theſe projects had been carefully concealed, at laſt got intelligence of the deſign, and ordered Odo to be arreſted. His officers, from reſpect to the immunities which the eccleſiaſtics now aſſumed, ſcrupled to execute the command, till the king himſelf was obliged in perſon to ſeize him; and when Odo inſiſted that he was a prelate, and exempt from all temporal juriſdiction, William replied, that he arreſted him not as biſhop of Baieux, but as earl of Kent. He was ſent priſoner to Normandy; and notwithſtanding the remonſtrances and menaces of Gregory, was detained in cuſtody during the remainder of this reign.

(1083.) Another domeſtic event gave the king much more concern: It was the death of Matilda, his conſort, whom

whom he tenderly loved, and for whom he had ever preſerved the moſt ſincere friendſhip. Three years afterwards he paſſed into Normandy, and carried with him Edgar Atheling, to whom he willingly granted permiſſion to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He was detained on the continent (1087) by a miſunderſtanding, which broke out between him and the king of France, and which was occaſioned by inroads made into Normandy by ſome French barons on the frontiers. It was little in the power of princes at that time to reſtrain their licentious nobility; but William ſuſpected that theſe barons durſt not have provoked his indignation, had they not been aſſured of the countenance and protection of Philip. His diſpleaſure was increaſed by the account he received of ſome railleries which that monarch had thrown out againſt him. William, who was become corpulent, had been detained in bed ſome time by ſickneſs; upon which, Philip expreſſed his ſurpriſe that his brother of England ſhould be ſo long in being delivered of his big belly. The king ſent him word, that, as ſoon as he was up, he would preſent ſo many lights at Notre-dame, as would perhaps give little pleaſure to the king of France; alluding to the uſual practice at that time of women after child-birth. Immediately on his recovery, he led an army into l'Iſle de France, and laid every thing waſte with fire and ſword. He took the town of Mante, which he reduced to aſhes. But the progreſs of theſe hoſtilities was ſtopped by an accident, which ſoon after put an end to William's life. His horſe ſtarting aſide of a ſudden, he bruiſed his belly on the pommel of the ſaddle; and being in a bad habit of body, as well as ſomewhat advanced in years, he began to apprehend the conſequences, and ordered himſelf to be carried in a litter to the monaſtery of St. Gervas. Finding his illneſs increaſe, and being ſenſible of the approach of death, he diſcovered at laſt the vanity of all human grandeur, and was ſtruck with remorſe for thoſe horrible cruelties and acts of violence, which, in the attainment and defence of it, he had committed during the courſe of his reign over England. He endeavoured

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to make atonement by preſents to churches and monaſteries; and he iſſued orders, that earl Morcar, Siward, Bearne, and other Engliſh priſoners, ſhould be ſet at liberty. He was even prevailed on, though not without reluctance, to conſent, with his dying breath, to releaſe his brother Odo, againſt whom he was extremely incenſed. He left Normandy and Maine to his eldeſt ſon Robert: He wrote to Lanfranc, deſiring him to crown William king of England: He bequeathed to Henry nothing but the poſſeſſions of his mother Matilda; but foretold, that he would one day ſurpaſs both his brothers in power and opulence. He expired (September 9) in the ſixty-third year of his age, in the twenty-firſt year of his reign over England, and in the fifty-fourth of that over Normandy.

Few princes have been more fortunate than this great monarch, or were better entitled to grandeur and proſperity, from the abilities and the vigour of mind which he diſplayed in all his conduct. His ſpirit was bold and enterpriſing, yet guided by prudence: His ambition, which was exorbitant, and lay little under the reſtraints of juſtice, ſtill leſs under thoſe of humanity, ever ſubmitted to the dictates of ſound policy. Born in an age when the minds of men were intractable and unacquainted with ſubmiſſion, he was yet able to direct them to his purpoſes; and partly from the aſcendant of his vehement character, partly from art and diſſimulation, to eſtabliſh an unlimited authority. Though not inſenſible to generoſity, he was hardened againſt compaſſion; and he ſeemed equally oſtentatious and equally ambitious of ſhow and parade in his clemency and in his ſeverity. The maxims of his adminiſtration were auſtere; but might have been uſeful, had they been ſolely employed to preſerve order in an eſtabliſhed government: They were ill calculated for ſoftening the rigours, which, under the moſt gentle management, are inſeparable from conqueſt. His attempt againſt England was the laſt great enterpriſe of the kind, which, during the courſe of ſeven hundred years, has fully ſucceeded in Europe; and the force of his genius broke through

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thoſe limits, which firſt the feudal inſtitutions, then the refined policy of princes, have fixed to the ſeveral ſtates of Chriſtendom. Though he rendered himſelf infinitely odious to his Engliſh ſubjects, he tranſmitted his power to his poſterity, and the throne is ſtill filled by his deſcendants: A proof, that the foundations which he laid were firm and ſolid, and that, amidſt all his violence, while he ſeemed only to gratify the preſent paſſion, he had ſtill an eye towards futurity.

Some writers have been deſirous of refuſing to this prince the title of Conqueror, in the ſenſe which that term commonly bears; and, on pretence that the word is ſometimes in old books applied to ſuch as make an acquiſition of territory by any means, they are willing to reject William's title, by right of war, to the crown of England. It is needleſs to enter into a controverſy, which, by the terms of it, muſt neceſſarily degenerate into a diſpute of words. It ſuffices to ſay, that the duke of Normandy's firſt invaſion of the iſland was hoſtile; that his ſubſequent adminiſtration was entirely ſupported by arms; that in the very frame of his laws he made a diſtinction between the Normans and Engliſh, to the advantage of the former; that he acted in every thing as abſolute maſter over the natives, whoſe intereſt and affections he totally diſregarded; and that if there was an interval when he aſſumed the appearance of a legal ſovereign, the period was very ſhort, and was nothing but a temporary ſacrifice, which he, as has been the caſe with moſt conquerors, was obliged to make, of his inclination to his preſent policy. Scarce any of thoſe revolutions, which both in hiſtory and in common language have always been denominated conqueſts, appear equally violent, or were attended with ſo ſudden an alteration both of power and property. The Roman ſtate, which ſpread its dominion over Europe, left the rights of individuals in a great meaſure untouched; and thoſe civilized conquerors, while they made their own country the ſeat of empire, found that they could draw moſt advantage from the ſubjected provinces, by ſecuring to the natives the free enjoyment of

of their own laws and of their private poſſeſſions. The barbarians who ſubdued the Roman empire, though they ſettled in the conquered countries, yet being accuſtomed to a rude uncultivated life, found a part only of the land ſufficient to ſupply all their wants; and they were not tempted to ſeize extenſive poſſeſſions, which they knew neither how to cultivate nor enjoy. But the Normans and other foreigners, who followed the ſtandard of William, while they made the vanquiſhed kingdom the ſeat of government, were yet ſo far advanced in arts as to be acquainted with the advantages of a large property; and having totally ſubdued the natives, they puſhed the rights of conqueſt (very extenſive in the eyes of avarice and ambition, however narrow in thoſe of reaſon) to the utmoſt extremity againſt them. Except the former conqueſt of England by the Saxons themſelves, who were induced, by peculiar circumſtances, to proceed even to the extermination of the natives, it would be difficult to find in all hiſtory a revolution more deſtructive, or attended with a more complete ſubjection of the ancient inhabitants. Contumely ſeems even to have been wantonly added to oppreſſion; and the natives were univerſally reduced to ſuch a ſtate of meanneſs and poverty, that the Engliſh name became a term of reproach; and ſeveral generations elapſed before one family of Saxon pedigree was raiſed to any conſiderable honours, or could ſo much as attain the rank of baron of the realm *. Theſe facts are ſo apparent from the whole tenour of the Engliſh hiſtory, that none would have been tempted to deny or elude them, were they not heated by the controverſies of faction; while one party was *abſurdly* afraid of thoſe *abſurd* conſequences which they ſaw the other party inclined to draw from this event. But it is evident that the preſent rights

* So late as the reign of king Stephen, the earl of Albemarle, before the battle of the ſtandard, addreſſed the officers of his army in theſe terms, *Proceres Angliæ clariſſimi, & genere Normanni, &c.* All the barons and military men of England ſtill called themſelves Normans.

and

and privileges of the people, who are a mixture of Engliſh and Normans, can never be affected by a tranſaction, which paſſed ſeven hundred years ago; and as all ancient authors *, who lived neareſt the time, and beſt knew the ſtate of the country, unanimouſly ſpeak of the Norman dominion as a conqueſt by war and arms, no reaſonable man, from the fear of imaginary conſequences, will ever be tempted to reject their concurring and undoubted teſtimony.

King William had iſſue, beſides his three ſons who ſurvived him, five daughters, to wit, (1.) Cicily, a nun in the monaſtery of Feſchamp, afterwards abbeſs in the Holy Trinity at Caen, where ſhe died in 1127. (2.) Conſtantia, married to Alan Fergent earl of Britanny. She died without iſſue. (3.) Alice, contracted to Harold. (4.) Adela, married to Stephen earl of Blois, by whom ſhe had four ſons, William, Theobald, Henry, and Stephen; of whom the elder was neglected on account of the imbecility of his underſtanding. (5.) Agatha, who died a virgin, but was betrothed to the king of Gallicia. She died on her journey thither, before ſhe joined her bridegroom.

CHAP. V.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

Acceſſion of William Rufus—Conſpiracy againſt the king—Invaſion of Normandy—The Cruſades—Acquiſition of Normandy—Quarrel with Anſelm the primate—Death—and character of William Rufus.

WILLIAM, ſirnamed *Rufus*, or the *Red*, from the colour of his hair, had no ſooner procured his father's recommendatory letter to Lanfranc the primate, than he haſtened to take meaſures for ſecuring to himſelf

* See note [L] at the end of the volume.

WILLIAM III.

Engravd. for J. Parsons, 21. Paternoster Row. Dec.r 1793.

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the government of England. Senſible that a deed ſo unformal, and ſo little prepared, which violated Robert's right of primogeniture, might meet with great oppoſition, he truſted entirely for ſucceſs to his own celerity; and having left St. Gervas, while William was breathing his laſt, he arrived in England before intelligence of his father's death had reached that kingdom. Pretending orders from the king, he ſecured the fortreſſes of Dover, Pevenſey, and Haſtings, whoſe ſituation rendered them of the greateſt importance; and he got poſſeſſion of the royal treaſure at Wincheſter, amounting to the ſum of ſixty thouſand pounds, by which he hoped to encourage and increaſe his partiſans. The primate, whoſe rank and reputation in the kingdom gave him great authority, had been entruſted with the care of his education, and had conferred on him the honour of knighthood; and being connected with him by theſe ties, and probably deeming his pretenſions juſt, declared that he would pay a willing obedience to the laſt will of the Conqueror, his friend and benefactor. Having aſſembled ſome biſhops, and ſome of the principal nobility, he inſtantly proceeded to the ceremony of crowning the new king; and by this diſpatch endeavoured to prevent all faction and reſiſtance. At the ſame time Robert, who had been already acknowledged ſucceſſor to Normandy, took peaceable poſſeſſion of that dutchy.

But though this partition appeared to have been made without any violence or oppoſition, there remained in England many cauſes of diſcontent, which ſeemed to menace that kingdom with a ſudden revolution. The barons, who generally poſſeſſed large eſtates both in England and in Normandy, were uneaſy at the ſeparation of thoſe territories; and foreſaw, that as it would be impoſſible for them to preſerve long their allegiance to two maſters, they muſt neceſſarily reſign either their ancient patrimony or their new acquiſitions. Robert's title to the dutchy they eſteemed inconteſtable; his claim to the kingdom plauſible; and they all deſired that this prince, who alone had any pretenſions to unite theſe ſtates, ſhould be put in poſſeſſion of both. A compariſon

alſo of the perſonal qualities of the two brothers led them to give the preference to the elder. The duke was brave, open, ſincere, generous: Even his predominant faults, his extreme indolence and facility, were not diſagreeable to thoſe haughty barons who affected independence, and ſubmitted with reluctance to a vigorous adminiſtration in their ſovereign. The king, though equally brave, was violent, haughty, tyrannical, and ſeemed diſpoſed to govern more by the fear than by the love of his ſubjects. Odo biſhop of Baieux, and Robert earl of Mortaigne, maternal brothers of the Conqueror, envying the great credit of Lanfranc, which was increaſed by his late ſervices, enforced all theſe motives with their partiſans, and engaged them in a formal conſpiracy to dethrone the king. They communicated their deſign to Euſtace count of Bologne, Roger earl of Shrewſbury and Arundel, Robert de Beleſme, his eldeſt ſon, William biſhop of Durham, Robert de Mcubray, Roger Bigod, Hugh de Grentmeſnil; and they eaſily procured the aſſent of theſe potent noblemen. The conſpirators, retiring to their caſtles, haſtened to put themſelves in a military poſture; and expecting to be ſoon ſupported by a powerful army from Normandy, they had already begun hoſtilities in many places.

The king, ſenſible of his perilous ſituation, endeavoured to engage the affections of the native Engliſh. As that people were now ſo thoroughly ſubdued that they no longer aſpired to the recovery of their ancient liberties, and were content with the proſpect of ſome mitigation in the tyranny of the Norman princes, they zealouſly embraced William's cauſe, upon receiving general promiſes of good treatment, and of enjoying the licenſe of hunting in the royal foreſts. The king was ſoon in a ſituation to take the field; and as he knew the danger of delay, he ſuddenly marched into Kent; where his uncles had already ſeized the fortreſſes of Pevenſey and Rocheſter. Theſe places he ſucceſſively reduced by famine; and though he was prevailed on by the earl of Cheſter, William de Warenne, and Robert Fitz-Hammon, who had embraced his cauſe, to ſpare the lives of the

the rebels, he confiſcated all their eſtates, and baniſhed them the kingdom. This ſucceſs gave authority to his negotiations with Roger earl of Shrewſbury, whom he detached from the confederates: And as his powerful fleet, joined to the indolent conduct of Robert, prevented the arrival of the Norman ſuccours, all the other rebels found no reſource but in flight or ſubmiſſion. Some of them received a pardon; but the greater part were attainted; and the king beſtowed their eſtates on the Norman barons, who had remained faithful to him.

(1089.) William, freed from the danger of theſe inſurrections, took little care of fulfilling his promiſes to the Engliſh, who ſtill found themſelves expoſed to the ſame oppreſſions which they had undergone during the reign of the Conqueror, and which were rather augmented by the violent impetuous temper of the preſent monarch. The death of Lanfranc, who retained great influence over him, gave ſoon after a full career to his tyranny; and all orders of men found reaſon to complain of an arbitrary and illegal adminiſtration. Even the privileges of the church, held ſacred in thoſe days, were a feeble rampart againſt his uſurpations. He ſeized the temporalities of all the vacant biſhoprics and abbeys; he delayed the appointing of ſucceſſors to thoſe dignities, that he might the longer enjoy the profits of their revenue; he beſtowed ſome of the church lands in property on his captains and favourites; and he openly ſet to ſale ſuch ſees and abbeys as he thought proper to diſpoſe of. Though the murmurs of the eccleſiaſtics, which were quickly propagated to the nation, roſe high againſt this grievance, the terror of William's authority, confirmed by the ſuppreſſion of the late inſurrections, retained every one in ſubjection, and preſerved general tranquillity in England.

(1090.) The king even thought himſelf enabled to diſturb his brother in the poſſeſſion of Normandy. The looſe and negligent adminiſtration of that prince had emboldened the Norman barons to effect a great independency; and their mutual quarrels and devaſtations had rendered that whole territory a ſcene of violence and

outrage. Two of them, Walter and Odo, were bribed by William to deliver the fortreſſes of St. Valori and Albemarle into his hands: Others ſoon after imitated the example of revolt; while Philip king of France, who ought to have protected his vaſſal in the poſſeſſion of his fief, was, after making ſome efforts in his favour, engaged by large preſents to remain neuter. The duke had alſo reaſon to apprehend danger from the intrigues of his brother Henry. This young prince, who had inherited nothing of his father's great poſſeſſions, but ſome of his money, had furniſhed Robert, while he was making his preparations againſt England, with the ſum of three thouſand marks; and, in return for ſo ſlender a ſupply, had been put in poſſeſſion of the Cotentin, which comprehended near a third of the dutchy of Normandy. Robert afterwards, upon ſome ſuſpicion, threw him into priſon; but finding himſelf expoſed to invaſion from the king of England, and dreading the conjunction of the two brothers againſt him, he now gave Henry his liberty, and even made uſe of his aſſiſtance in ſuppreſſing the inſurrections of his rebellious ſubjects. Conan, a rich burgeſs of Roüen, had entered into a conſpiracy to deliver that city to William; but Henry, on the detection of his guilt, carried the traitor up to a high tower, and with his own hands flung him from the battlements.

The king appeared in Normandy at the head of an army; and affairs ſeemed to have come to extremity between the brothers; when the nobility on both ſides, ſtrongly connected by intereſt and alliances, interpoſed and mediated an accommodation. The chief advantage of this treaty accrued to William, who obtained poſſeſſion of the territory of Eu, the towns of Aumale, Feſchamp, and other places: But in return he promiſed that he would aſſiſt his brother in ſubduing Maine, which had rebelled; and that the Norman barons, attainted in Robert's cauſe, ſhould be reſtored to their eſtates in England. The two brothers alſo ſtipulated, that on the demiſe of either without iſſue, the ſurvivor ſhould inherit all his dominions; and twelve of the moſt powerful ba-

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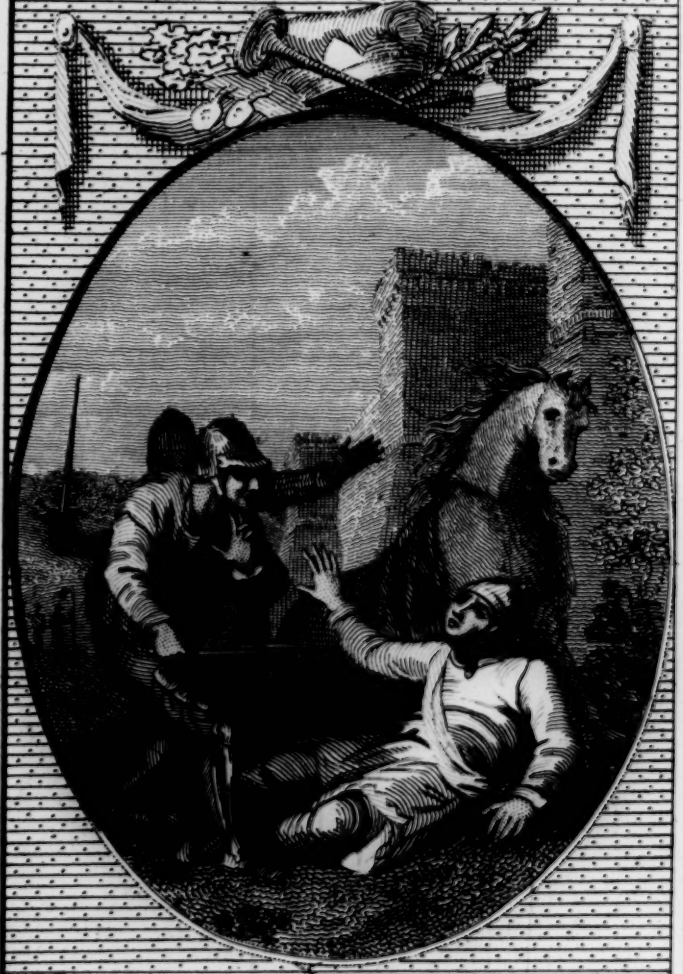

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The danger of William Rufus under the walls of St. Michaels Mount.

Engraved for J. Parsons, 21, Paternoster Row. April 1794.

rons on each ſide ſwore that they would employ their power to inſure the effectual execution of the whole treaty: A ſtrong proof of the great independence and authority of the nobles in thoſe ages!

Prince Henry, diſguſted that ſo little care had been taken of his intereſts in this accommodation, retired to St. Michael's Mount, a ſtrong fortreſs on the coaſt of Normandy, and infeſted the neighbourhood with his incurſions. Robert and William, with their joint forces, beſieged him in this place, and had nearly reduced him by the ſcarcity of water; when the elder, hearing of his diſtreſs, granted him permiſſion to ſupply himſelf, and alſo ſent him ſome pipes of wine for his own table. Being reproved by William for this ill-timed generoſity, he replied, *What, ſhall I ſuffer my brother to die of thirſt? Where ſhall we find another when he is gone?* The king alſo, during this ſiege, performed an act of generoſity which was leſs ſuitable to his character. Riding out one day alone, to take a ſurvey of the fortreſs, he was attacked by two ſoldiers, and diſmounted. One of them drew his ſword in order to diſpatch him; when the king exclaimed, *Hold, knave! I am the king of England.* The ſoldier ſuſpended his blow; and raiſing the king from the ground, with expreſſions of reſpect, received a handſome reward, and was taken into his ſervice. Prince Henry was ſoon after obliged to capitulate; and being deſpoiled of all his patrimony, wandered about for ſome time with very few attendants, and often in great poverty.

The continued inteſtine diſcord among the barons was alone in that age deſtructive: The public wars were commonly ſhort and feeble, produced little bloodſhed, and were attended with no memorable event. To this Norman war, which was ſo ſoon concluded, there ſucceeded hoſtilities with Scotland, which were not of longer duration. Robert here commanded his brother's army, and obliged Malcolm to accept of peace, and do homage to the crown of England. This peace was not more durable. Malcolm, two years after (1093), levying an army, invaded England; and after ravaging Northum-

berland, he laid ſiege to Alnwic, where a party of earl Moubray's troops falling upon him by ſurpriſe, a ſharp action enſued, in which Malcolm was ſlain. This incident interrupted for ſome years the regular ſucceſſion to the Scottiſh crown. Though Malcolm left legitimate ſons, his brother Donald, on account of the youth of theſe princes, was advanced to the throne; but kept no long poſſeſſion of it. Duncan, natural ſon of Malcolm, formed a conſpiracy againſt him; and being aſſiſted by William with a ſmall force, made himſelf maſter of the kingdom. New broils enſued with Normandy. The frank, open, remiſs temper of Robert was ill fitted to withſtand the intereſted rapacious character of William, who, ſupported by greater power, was ſtill encroaching on his brother's poſſeſſions, and inſtigating his turbulent barons to rebellion againſt him. The king, having gone over to Normandy (1094) to ſupport his partiſans, ordered an army of twenty thouſand men to be levied in England, and to be conducted to the ſea-coaſt, as if they were inſtantly to be embarked. Here Ralph Flambard, the king's miniſter, and the chief inſtrument of his extortions, exacted ten ſhillings a-piece from them, in lieu of their ſervice, and then diſmiſſed them into their ſeveral counties. This money was ſo ſkilfully employed by William, that it rendered him better ſervice than he could have expected from the army. He engaged the French king by new preſents to depart from the protection of Robert; and he daily bribed the Norman barons to deſert his ſervice; but was prevented from puſhing his advantages by an incurſion of the Welſh, which obliged him to return to England. He found no difficulty in repelling the enemy; but was not able to make any conſiderable impreſſion on a country guarded by its mountainous ſituation. (1095.) A conſpiracy of his own barons, which was detected at this time, appeared a more ſerious concern, and engroſſed all his attention. Robert Moubray earl of Northumberland was at the head of this combination; and he engaged in it the count d'Eu, Richard de Tunbridge, Roger de Lacey, and many others. The purpoſe of the con-

conſpirators was to dethrone the king, and to advance in his ſtead Stephen count of Aumale, nephew to the Conqueror. William's diſpatch prevented the deſign from taking effect, and diſconcerted the conſpirators. Moubray made ſome reſiſtance; but being taken priſoner, was attainted, and thrown into confinement, where he died about thirty years after. (1096.) The count d'Eu denied his concurrence in the plot; and to juſtify himſelf, fought, in the preſence of the court at Windſor, a duel with Geoffrey Bainard who accuſed him. But being worſted in the combat, he was condemned to be caſtrated, and to have his eyes put out. William de Aideri, another conſpirator, was ſuppoſed to be treated with more rigour when he was ſentenced to be hanged.

But the noiſe of theſe petty wars and commotions was quite ſunk in the tumult of the cruſades, which now engroſſed the attention of Europe, and have ever ſince engaged the curioſity of mankind, as the moſt ſignal and moſt durable monument of human folly that has yet appeared in any age or nation. After Mahomet had, by means of his pretended revelations, united the diſperſed Arabians under one head, they iſſued forth from their deſerts in great multitudes; and being animated with zeal for their new religion, and ſupported by the vigour of their new government, they made deep impreſſion on the eaſtern empire, which was far in the decline, with regard both to military diſcipline and to civil policy. Jeruſalem, by its ſituation, became one of their moſt early conqueſts; and the Chriſtians had the mortification to ſee the holy ſepulchre, and the other places conſecrated by the preſence of their religious Founder, fallen into the poſſeſſion of infideis. But the Arabians or Saracens were ſo employed in military enterpriſes, by which they ſpread their empire in a few years from the banks of the Ganges to the Streights of Gibraltar, that they had no leiſure for theological controverſy: And though the Alcoran, the original monument of their faith, ſeems to contain ſome violent precepts, they were much leſs infected with the ſpirit of bigotry and perſecution, than the indolent and ſpecula-

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tive Greeks, who were continually refining on the several articles of their religious ſyſtem. They gave little diſturbance to thoſe zealous pilgrims who daily flocked to Jeruſalem; and they allowed every man, after paying a moderate tribute, to viſit the holy ſepulchre, to perform his religious duties, and to return in peace. But the Turcomans or Turks, a tribe of Tartars, who had embraced Mahometaniſm, having wreſted Syria from the Saracens, and having, in the year 1065, made themſelves maſters of Jeruſalem, rendered the pilgrimage much more difficult and dangerous to the Chriſtians. The barbarity of their manners, and the confuſions attending their unſettled government, expoſed the pilgrims to many inſults, robberies, and extortions; and theſe zealots, returning from their meritorious fatigues and ſufferings, filled all Chriſtendom with indignation againſt the infidels, who profaned the holy city by their preſence, and derided the ſacred myſteries in the very place of their completion. Gregory VII. among the other vaſt ideas which he entertained, had formed the deſign of uniting all the weſtern Chriſtians againſt the Mahometans; but the egregious and violent invaſions of that pontiff on the civil power of princes, had created him ſo many enemies, and had rendered his ſchemes ſo ſuſpicious, that he was not able to make great progreſs in this undertaking. The work was reſerved for a meaner inſtrument, whoſe low condition in life expoſed him to no jealouſy, and whoſe folly was well calculated to coincide with the prevailing principles of the times.

Peter, commonly called the Hermit, a native of Amiens in Picardy, had made the pilgrimage to Jeruſalem. Being deeply affected with the dangers to which that act of piety now expoſed the pilgrims, as well as with the inſtances of oppreſſion under which the eaſtern Chriſtians laboured, he entertained the bold, and in all appearance impracticable project of leading into Aſia, from the farthеſt extremities of the Weſt, armies ſufficient to ſubdue thoſe potent and warlike nations which now held the holy city in ſubjection. He propoſed his views to Martin II. who filled the papal chair, and who, though ſenſible

ſible of the advantages which the head of the Chriſtian religion muſt reap from a religious war, and though he eſteemed the blind zeal of Peter a proper means for effecting the purpoſe, reſolved not to interpoſe his authority, till he ſaw a greater probability of ſucceſs. He ſummoned a council at Placentia, which conſiſted of four thouſand eccleſiaſtics, and thirty thouſand ſeculars; and which was ſo numerous that no hall could contain the multitude, and it was neceſſary to hold the aſſembly in a plain. The harangues of the pope, and of Peter himſelf, repreſenting the diſmal ſituation of their brethren in the Eaſt, and the indignity ſuffered by the Chriſtian name, in allowing the holy city to remain in the hands of infidels, here found the minds of men ſo well prepared, that the whole multitude ſuddenly and violently declared for the war, and ſolemnly devoted themſelves to perform this ſervice, ſo meritorious as they believed it to God and religion.

But though Italy ſeemed thus to have zealouſly embraced the enterprize, Martin knew that, in order to inſure ſucceſs, it was neceſſary to enliſt the greater and more warlike nations in the ſame engagement; and having previouſly exhorted Peter to viſit the chief cities and ſovereigns of Chriſtendom, he ſummoned another council at Clermont in Auvergne. The fame of this great and pious deſign, being now univerſally diffuſed, procured the attendance of the greateſt prelates, nobles, and princes; and when the pope and the hermit renewed their pathetic exhortations, the whole aſſembly, as if impelled by an immediate inſpiration, not moved by their preceding impreſſions, exclaimed with one voice, *It is the will of God! It is the will of God!* Words deemed ſo memorable, and ſo much the reſult of a divine influence, that they were employed as the ſignal of rendezvous and battle in all the future exploits of thoſe adventurers. Men of all ranks flew to arms with the utmoſt ardour; and an exterior ſymbol too, a circumſtance of chief moment, was here choſen by the devoted combatants. The ſign of the croſs, which had been hitherto ſo much revered among Chriſtians, and which,

which, the more it was an object of reproach among the Pagan world, was the more paſſionately cheriſhed by them, became the badge of union, and was affixed to their right ſhoulder, by all who enliſted themſelves in this ſacred warfare.

Europe was at this time ſunk into profound ignorance and ſuperſtition: The eccleſiaſtics had acquired the greateſt aſcendant over the human mind: The people, who, being little reſtrained by honour, and leſs by law, abandoned themſelves to the worſt crimes and diſorders, knew of no other expiation than the obſervances impoſed on them by their ſpiritual paſtors: And it was eaſy to repreſent the holy war as an equivalent for all penances, and an atonement for every violation of juſtice and humanity. But, amidſt the abject ſuperſtition which now prevailed, the military ſpirit alſo had univerſally diffuſed itſelf; and though not ſupported by art or diſcipline, was become the general paſſion of the nations governed by the feudal law. All the great lords poſſeſſed the right of peace and war: They were engaged in perpetual hoſtilities with each other: The open country was become a ſcene of outrage and diſorder: The cities, ſtill mean and poor, were neither guarded by walls nor protected by privileges, and were expoſed to every inſult: Individuals were obliged to depend for ſafety on their own force, or their private alliances: And valour was the only excellence which was held in eſteem, or gave one man the pre-eminence above another. When all the particular ſuperſtitions, therefore, were here united in one great object, the ardour for military enterprizes took the ſame direction; and Europe, impelled by its two ruling paſſions, was looſened, as it were, from its foundations, and ſeemed to precipitate itſelf in one united body upon the Eaſt.

All orders of men, deeming the cruſades the only road to heaven, enliſted themſelves under theſe ſacred banners, and were impatient to open the way with their ſword to the holy city. Nobles, artiſans, peaſants, even prieſts, inrolled their names; and to decline this meritorious ſervice was branded with the reproach of impiety, or what

what perhaps was eſteemed ſtill more diſgraceful, of cowardice and puſillanimity. The infirm and aged contributed to the expedition by preſents and money; and many of them, not ſatisfied with the merit of this atonement, attended it in perſon, and were determined, if poſſible, to breathe their laſt in ſight of that city where their Saviour had died for them. Women themſelves, concealing their ſex under the diſguiſe of armour, attended the camp; and commonly forgot ſtill more the duty of the ſex, by proſtituting themſelves, without reſerve, to the army. The greateſt criminals were forward in a ſervice, which they regarded as a propitiation for all crimes; and the moſt enormous diſorders were, during the courſe of thoſe expeditions, committed by men enured to wickedneſs, encouraged by example, and impelled by neceſſity. The multitude of the adventurers ſoon became ſo great, that their more ſagacious leaders, Hugh count of Vermandois, brother to the French king, Raymond count of Toulouſe, Godfrey of Boüillon, prince of Brabant, and Stephen count of Blois, became apprehenſive leſt the greatneſs itſelf of the armament ſhould diſappoint its purpoſe; and they permitted an undiſciplined multitude, computed at 300,000 men, to go before them, under the command of Peter the Hermit and Walter the Moneyleſs. Theſe men took the road towards Conſtantinople through Hungary and Bulgaria; and truſting that Heaven, by ſupernatural aſſiſtance, would ſupply all their neceſſities, they made no proviſion for ſubſiſtence on their march. They ſoon found themſelves obliged to obtain by plunder, what they had vainly expected from miracles; and the enraged inhabitants of the countries through which they paſſed, gathering together in arms, attacked the diſorderly multitude, and put them to ſlaughter without reſiſtance. The more diſciplined armies followed after; and paſſing the ſtreights at Conſtantinople, they were muſtered in the plains of Aſia, and amounted in the whole to the number of 700,000 combatants.

Amidſt this univerſal frenzy, which ſpread itſelf by contagion throughout Europe, eſpecially in France and Germany,

Germany, men were not entirely forgetful of their preſent intereſts; and both thoſe who went on this expedition, and thoſe who ſtayed behind, entertained ſchemes of gratifying, by its means, their avarice or their ambition. The nobles who enliſted themſelves were moved, from the romantic ſpirit of the age, to hope for opulent eſtabliſhments in the Eaſt, the chief ſeat of arts and commerce during thoſe ages; and in purſuit of theſe chimerical projects, they ſold at the loweſt price their ancient caſtles and inheritances, which had now loſt all value in their eyes. The greater princes, who remained at home, beſides eſtabliſhing peace in their dominions by giving occupation abroad to the inquietude and martial diſpoſition of their ſubjects, took the opportunity of annexing to their crown many conſiderable fiefs, either by purchaſe, or by the extinction of heirs. The pope frequently turned the zeal of the cruſaders from the infidels againſt his own enemies, whom he repreſented as equally criminal with the enemies of Chriſt. The convents and other religious ſocieties bought the poſſeſſions of the adventurers; and as the contributions of the faithful were commonly entruſted to their management, they often diverted to this purpoſe what was intended to be employed againſt the infidels. But no one was a more immediate gainer by this epidemic fury than the king of England, who kept aloof from all connexions with thoſe fanatical and romantic warriors.

Robert duke of Normandy, impelled by the bravery and miſtaken generoſity of his ſpirit, had early enliſted himſelf in the cruſade; but being always unprovided with money, he found that it would be impracticable for him to appear in a manner ſuitable to his rank and ſtation at the head of his numerous vaſſals and ſubjects, who, tranſported with the general rage, were determined to follow him into Aſia. He reſolved, therefore, to mortgage, or rather to ſell his dominions, which he had not talents to govern; and he offered them to his brother William, for the very unequal ſum of ten thouſand marks. The bargain was ſoon concluded: The king raiſed the money by violent extortions on his ſubjects

jects of all ranks, even on the convents, who were obliged to melt their plate in order to furnish the quota demanded of them: He was put in possession of Normandy and Maine; and Robert, providing himself with a magnificent train, set out for the Holy Land, in pursuit of glory, and in full confidence of securing his eternal salvation.

The smallness of this sum, with the difficulties which William found in raising it, suffices alone to refute the account which is heedlessly adopted by historians, of the enormous revenue of the Conqueror. Is it credible, that Robert would consign to the rapacious hands of his brother such considerable dominions, for a sum, which, according to that account, made not a week's income of his father's English revenue alone? Or that the king of England could not on demand, without oppressing his subjects, have been able to pay him the money? The Conqueror, it is agreed, was frugal as well as rapacious; yet his treasure, at his death, exceeded not 60,000 pounds, which hardly amounted to his income for two months: Another certain refutation of that exaggerated account.

The fury of the crusades, during this age, less infected England than the neighbouring kingdoms; probably because the Norman conquerors, finding their settlement in that kingdom still somewhat precarious, durst not abandon their homes in quest of distant adventures. The selfish interested spirit also of the king, which kept him from kindling in the general flame, checked its progress among his subjects; and as he is accused of open profaneness, and was endued with a sharp wit, it is likely that he made the romantic chivalry of the crusaders the object of his perpetual raillery. As an instance of his irreligion, we are told, that he once accepted of sixty marks from a Jew, whose son had been converted to Christianity, and who engaged him by that present to assist him in bringing back the youth to Judaism. William employed both menaces and persuasion for that purpose; but finding the convert obstinate in his new faith, he sent for the father, and told him,

him, that as he had not ſucceeded, it was not juſt that he ſhould keep the preſent; but as he had done his utmoſt, it was but equitable that he ſhould be paid for his pains; and he would therefore retain only thirty marks of the money. At another time, it is ſaid, he ſent for ſome learned Chriſtian theologians and ſome rabbies, and bade them fairly diſpute the queſtion of their religion in his preſence: He was perfectly indifferent between them; had his ears open to reaſon and conviction; and would embrace that doctrine which upon compariſon ſhould be found ſupported by the moſt ſolid arguments. If this ſtory be true, it is probable that he meant only to amuſe himſelf by turning both into ridicule: But we muſt be cautious of admitting every thing related by the monkiſh hiſtorians to the diſadvantage of this prince: He had the misfortune to be engaged in quarrels with the eccleſiaſtics, particularly with Anſelm, commonly called St. Anſelm, archbiſhop of Canterbury; and it is no wonder his memory ſhould be blackened by the hiſtorians of that order.

After the death of Lanfranc, the king for ſeveral years retained in his own hands the revenues of Canterbury, as he did thoſe of many other vacant biſhoprics; but falling into a dangerous ſickneſs, he was ſeized with remorſe, and the clergy repreſented to him, that he was in danger of eternal perdition, if before his death he did not make atonement for thoſe multiplied impieties and ſacrileges, of which he had been guilty. He reſolved therefore to ſupply inſtantly the vacancy of Canterbury; and for that purpoſe he ſent for Anſelm, a Piedmonteſe by birth, abbot of Bec in Normandy, who was much celebrated for his learning and piety. The abbot earneſtly refuſed the dignity, fell on his knees, wept, and intreated the king to change his purpoſe; and when he found the prince obſtinate in forcing the paſtoral ſtaff upon him, he kept his fiſt ſo faſt clenched, that it required the utmoſt violence of the byſtanders to open it, and force him to receive that enſign of ſpiritual dignity. William ſoon after recovered; and his paſſions regaining their wonted vigour, he returned to his former

violence

violence and rapine. He detained in prison several persons whom he had ordered to be freed during the time of his penitence; he still preyed upon the ecclesiastical benefices; the sale of spiritual dignities continued as open as ever; and he kept possession of a considerable part of the revenues belonging to the see of Canterbury. But he found in Anselm that persevering opposition, which he had reason to expect from the ostentatious humility which that prelate had displayed in refusing his promotion.

The opposition made by Anselm was the more dangerous, on account of the character of piety which he soon acquired in England, by his great zeal against all abuses, particularly those in dress and ornament. There was a mode, which, in that age, prevailed throughout Europe, both among men and women, to give an enormous length to their shoes, to draw the toe to a sharp point, and to affix to it the figure of a bird's bill, or some such ornament, which was turned upwards, and which was often sustained by gold or silver chains tied to the knee. The ecclesiastics took exception at this ornament, which they said was an attempt to bely the scripture, where it is affirmed, that no man can add a cubit to his stature; and they declaimed against it with great vehemence, nay assembled some synods, who absolutely condemned it. But, such are the strange contradictions in human nature! though the clergy, at that time, could overturn thrones, and had authority sufficient to send above a million of men on *their* errand to the deserts of Asia, they could never prevail against these long-pointed shoes: On the contrary, that caprice, contrary to all other modes, maintained its ground during several centuries; and if the clergy had not at last desisted from their persecution of it, it might still have been the prevailing fashion in Europe.

But Anselm was more fortunate in decrying the particular mode which was the object of his aversion, and which probably had not taken such fast hold of the affections of the people. He preached zealously against the long hair and curled locks which were then fashionable among the courtiers; he refused the ashes on Ash-

Wedneſday to thoſe who were ſo accoutred; and his authority and eloquence had ſuch influence, that the young men univerſally abandoned that ornament, and appeared in the cropt hair, which was recommended to them by the ſermons of the primate. The noted hiſtorian of Anſelm (Eadmer), who was alſo his companion and ſecretary, celebrates highly this effort of his zeal and piety.

When William's profaneneſs therefore returned to him with his health, he was ſoon engaged in controverſies with this auſtere prelate. There was at that time a ſchiſm in the church between Urban and Clement, who both pretended to the papacy; and Anſelm, who, as abbot of Bec, had already acknowledged the former, was determined, without the king's conſent, to introduce his authority into England. William, who, imitating his father's example, had prohibited his ſubjects from recognizing any pope whom he had not previouſly received, was enraged at this attempt; and ſummoned a ſynod at Rockingham, with an intention of depoſing Anſelm: But the prelate's ſuffragans declared, that, without the papal authority, they knew of no expedient for inflicting that puniſhment on their primate. The king was at laſt engaged by other motives to give the preference to Urban's title; Anſelm received the pall from that pontiff; and matters ſeemed to be accommodated between the king and the primate, when the quarrel broke out afreſh from a new cauſe. William had undertaken an expedition againſt Wales, and required the archbiſhop to furniſh his quota of ſoldiers for that ſervice; but Anſelm, who regarded the demand as an oppreſſion on the church, and yet durſt not refuſe compliance, ſent them ſo miſerably accoutred, that the king was extremely diſpleaſed, and threatened him with a proſecution. Anſelm, on the other hand, demanded poſitively that all the revenues of his ſee ſhould be reſtored to him; appealed to Rome againſt the king's injuſtice; and affairs came to ſuch extremities, that the primate, finding it dangerous to remain in the kingdom, deſired and obtained the king's permiſſion to retire beyond ſea. All his temporalities were ſeized; but he was received with

with great reſpect by Urban, who conſidered him as a martyr in the cauſe of religion, and even menaced the king, on account of his proceedings againſt the primate and the church, with the ſentence of excommunication. Anſelm aſſiſted at the council of Bari, where, beſides fixing the controverſy between the Greek and Latin churches concerning the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, the right of election to church preferments was declared to belong to the clergy alone, and ſpiritual cenſures were denounced againſt all eccleſiaſtics, who did homage to laymen for their fees or benefices, and againſt all laymen who exacted it. The rite of homage, by the feudal cuſtoms, was, that the vaſſal ſhould throw himſelf on his knees, ſhould put his joined hands between thoſe of his ſuperior, and ſhould in that poſture ſwear fealty to him. But the council declared it execrable, that pure hands, which could create God, and could offer him up as a ſacrifice for the ſalvation of mankind, ſhould be put, after this humiliating manner, between profane hands, which, beſides being enured to rapine and bloodſhed, were employed day and night in impure purpoſes, and obſcene contacts. Such were the reaſonings prevalent in that age; reaſonings which, though they cannot be paſſed over in ſilence, without omitting the moſt curious, and, perhaps, not the leaſt inſtructive part of hiſtory, can ſcarcely be delivered with the requiſite decency and gravity.

The ceſſion of Normandy and Maine by duke Robert (1097), increaſed the king's territories; but brought him no great increaſe of power, becauſe of the unſettled ſtate of thoſe countries, the mutinous diſpoſition of the barons, and the vicinity of the French king, who ſupported them in all their inſurrections. Even Helie, lord of la Fleche, a ſmall town in Anjou, was able to give him inquietude; and this great monarch was obliged to make ſeveral expeditions abroad, without being able to prevail over ſo petty a baron, who had acquired the confidence and affections of the inhabitants of Maine. He was, however, ſo fortunate as at laſt to take him priſoner in a rencounter; but having releaſed him, at the

interceſſion of the French king and the count of Anjou, he found the province of Maine ſtill expoſed to his intrigues and incurſions. Helie, being introduced by the citizens into the town of Mans, beſieged the garriſon in the citadel (1099): William, who was hunting in the New Foreſt, when he received intelligence of this hoſtile attempt, was ſo provoked, that he immediately turned his horſe, and galloped to the ſea-ſhore at Dartmouth; declaring, that he would not ſtop a moment till he had taken vengeance for the offence. He found the weather ſo cloudy and tempeſtuous, that the mariners thought it dangerous to put to ſea: But the king hurried on board, and ordered them to ſet ſail inſtantly; telling them, that they never yet heard of a king that was drowned. By this vigour and celerity, he delivered the citadel of Mans from its preſent danger; and purſuing Helie into his own territories, he laid ſiege to Majol, a ſmall caſtle in thoſe parts: But a wound which he received before this place (1100), obliged him to raiſe the ſiege; and he returned to England.

The weakneſs of the greateſt monarchs, during this age, in their military expeditions againſt their neareſt neighbours, appears the more ſurpriſing, when we conſider the prodigious numbers, which even petty princes, ſeconding the enthuſiaſtic rage of the people, were able to aſſemble, and to conduct in dangerous enterpriſes to the remote provinces of Aſia. William earl of Poitiers and duke of Guienne, inflamed with the glory, and not diſcouraged by the misfortunes, which had attended the former adventurers in the cruſades, had put himſelf at the head of an immenſe multitude, computed by ſome hiſtorians to amount to 60,000 horſe, and a much greater number of foot *, and he purpoſed to lead them into the Holy Land againſt the infidels. He wanted money to forward the preparations requiſite for this expedition, and he offered to mortgage all his dominions to William, without entertaining any ſcruple on account of that

* The whole is ſaid by Ordericus Vitalis to amount to 300,000 men.

rapacious

rapacious and iniquitous hand, to which he reſolved to conſign them. The king accepted the offer; and had prepared a fleet and an army, in order to eſcort the money, and take poſſeſſion of the rich provinces of Guienne and Poictou; when an accident (2d Auguſt) put an end to his life, and to all his ambitious projects. He was engaged in hunting, the ſole amuſement, and indeed the chief occupation of princes in thoſe rude times, when ſociety was little cultivated, and the arts afforded few objects worthy of attention. Walter Tyrrel, a French gentleman, remarkable for his addreſs in archery, attended him in this recreation, of which the New Foreſt was the ſcene; and as William had diſmounted after a chaſe, Tyrrel, impatient to ſhow his dexterity, let fly an arrow at a ſtag, which ſuddenly ſtarted before him. The arrow, glancing from a tree, ſtruck the king in the breaſt, and inſtantly ſlew him; while Tyrrel, without informing any one of the accident, put ſpurs to his horſe, haſtened to the ſea-ſhore, embarked for France, and joined the cruſade in an expedition to Jeruſalem; a penance which he impoſed on himſelf for this involuntary crime. The body of William was found in the foreſt by the country-people, and was buried without any pomp or ceremony at Wincheſter. His courtiers were negligent in performing the laſt duties to a maſter who was ſo little beloved; and every one was too much occupied in the intereſting object of fixing his ſucceſſor, to attend the funeral of a dead ſovereign.

The memory of this monarch is tranſmittted to us with little advantage by the churchmen, whom he had offended; and though we may ſuſpect, in general, that their account of his vices is ſomewhat exaggerated, his conduct affords little reaſon for contradicting the character which they have aſſigned him, or for attributing to him any very eſtimable qualities. He ſeems to have been a violent and tyrannical prince; a perfidious, encroaching, and dangerous neighbour; an unkind and ungenerous relation. He was equally prodigal and rapacious in the management of his treaſury; and if he

he poſſeſſed abilities, he lay ſo much under the government of impetuous paſſions, that he made little uſe of them in his adminiſtration; and he indulged, without reſerve, that domineering policy, which ſuited his temper, and which, if ſupported, as it was in him, with courage and vigour, proves often more ſucceſsful in diſorderly times, than the deepeſt foreſight and moſt refined artifice.

The monuments which remain of this prince in England, are the Tower, Weſtminſter-hall, and London-bridge, which he built. The moſt laudable foreign enterpriſe which he undertook, was the ſending of Edgar Atheling, three years before his death, into Scotland with a ſmall army, to reſtore prince Edgar, the true heir of that kingdom, ſon of Malcolm, and of Margaret, ſiſter of Edgar Atheling; and the enterpriſe proved ſucceſsful. It was remarked in that age, that Richard, an elder brother of William's, periſhed by an accident in the New Foreſt; Richard, his nephew, natural ſon of duke Robert, loſt his life in the ſame place, after the ſame manner: And all men, upon the king's fate, exclaimed, that, as the Conqueror had been guilty of extreme violence, in expelling all the inhabitants of that large diſtrict to make room for his game, the juſt vengeance of Heaven was ſignalized, in the ſame place, by the ſlaughter of his poſterity. William was killed in the thirteenth year of his reign, and about the fortieth of his age. As he was never married, he left no legitimate iſſue.

In the eleventh year of this reign, Magnus king of Norway made a deſcent on the iſle of Angleſea, but was repulſed by Hugh earl of Shrewſbury. This is the laſt attempt made by the northern nations upon England. That reſtleſs people ſeem about this time to have learned the practice of tillage, which thenceforth kept them at home, and freed the other nations of Europe from the devaſtations ſpread over them by thoſe piratical invaders. This proved one great cauſe of the ſubſequent ſettlement and improvement of the ſouthern nations.

NOTES

TO THE

FIRST VOLUME.

NOTE [A], p. 31.

THIS queſtion has been diſputed with as great zeal, and even acrimony, between the Scotch and Iriſh antiquaries, as if the honour of their reſpective countries were the moſt deeply concerned in the deciſion. We ſhall not enter into any detail on ſo unintereſting a ſubject; but ſhall propoſe our opinion in a few words. It appears more than probable, from the ſimilitude of language and manners, that Britain either was originally peopled, or was ſubdued, by the migration of inhabitants from Gaul, and Ireland from Britain: The poſition of the ſeveral countries is an additional reaſon that favours this concluſion. It appears alſo probable, that the migrations of that colony of Gauls or Celts, who peopled or ſubdued Ireland, was originally made from the north-weſt parts of Britain; and this conjecture (if it do not merit a higher name) is founded both on the Iriſh language, which is a very different dialect from the Welſh, and from the language anciently ſpoken in South Britain, and on the vicinity of Lancaſhire, Cumberland, Galloway, and Argyleſhire, to that iſland. Theſe events, as they paſſed long before the age of hiſtory and records, muſt be known by reaſoning alone, which in this caſe ſeems to be pretty ſatisfactory: Cæſar and Tacitus, not to mention a multitude of other Greek and Roman authors, were guided by like inferences. But beſides theſe primitive facts, which lie in a very remote antiquity, it is a matter of poſitive and undoubted teſtimony, that the Roman province of Britain, during the

the time of the lower empire, was much infeſted by bands of robbers or pirates, whom the provincial Britons called Scots or Scuits; a name which was probably uſed as a term of reproach, and which theſe banditti themſelves did not acknowledge or aſſume. We may infer from two paſſages in Claudian, and from one in Oroſius, and another in Iſidore, that the chief ſeat of theſe Scots was in Ireland. That ſome part of the Iriſh freebooters migrated back to the north-weſt parts of Britain, whence their anceſtors had probably been derived in a more remote age, is poſitively aſſerted by Bede, and implied in Gildas. I grant, that neither Bede nor Gildas are Cæſars or Taciteſes; but ſuch as they are, they remain the ſole teſtimony on the ſubject, and therefore muſt be relied on for want of better: Happily, the frivolouſneſs of the queſtion correſponds to the weakneſs of the authorities. Not to mention, that, if any part of the traditional hiſtory of a barbarous people can be relied on, it is the genealogy of nations, and even ſometimes that of families. It is in vain to argue againſt theſe facts from the ſuppoſed warlike diſpoſition of the Highlanders, and unwarlike of the ancient Iriſh. Thoſe arguments are ſtill much weaker than the authorities. Nations change very quickly in theſe particulars. The Britons were unable to reſiſt the Picts and Scots, and invited over the Saxons for their defence, who repelled thoſe invaders: Yet the ſame Britons valiantly reſiſted, for 150 years, not only this victorious band of Saxons, but infinite numbers more, who poured in upon them from all quarters. Robert Bruce, in 1322, made a peace, in which England, after many defeats, was conſtrained to acknowledge the independence of his country: Yet in no more diſtant period than ten years after, Scotland was totally ſubdued by a ſmall handful of Engliſh, led by a few private noblemen. All hiſtory is full of ſuch events. The Iriſh Scots, in the courſe of two or three centuries, might find time and opportunities ſufficient to ſettle in North Britain, though we can neither aſſign the period nor cauſes of that revolution. Their barbarous manner of life rendered them

them much fitter than the Romans for ſubduing theſe mountaineers. And, in a word, it is clear, from the language of the two countries, that the Highlanders and the Iriſh are the ſame people, and that the one are a colony from the other. We have poſitive evidence, which, though from neutral perſons, is not perhaps the beſt that may be wiſhed for, that the former, in the third or fourth century, ſprang from the latter: We have no evidence at all that the latter ſprang from the former. I ſhall add, that the name of Erſe or Iriſh, given by the low-country Scots to the language of the Scotch Highlanders, is a certain proof of the traditional opinion delivered from father to ſon, that the latter people came originally from Ireland.

NOTE [B], p. 120.

THERE is a ſeeming contradiction in ancient hiſtorians with regard to ſome circumſtances in the ſtory of Edwy and Elgiva. It is agreed, that this prince had a violent paſſion for his ſecond or third couſin, Elgiva, whom he married, though within the degrees prohibited by the canons. It is alſo agreed, that he was dragged from a lady on the day of his coronation, and that the lady was afterwards treated with the ſingular barbarity above mentioned. The only difference is, that Oſborne and ſome others call her his ſtrumpet, not his wife, as ſhe is ſaid to be by Malmeſbury. But this difference is eaſily reconciled: For if Edwy married her contrary to the canons, the monks would be ſure to deny her to be his wife, and would inſiſt that ſhe could be nothing but his ſtrumpet: So that, on the whole, we may eſteem this repreſentation of the matter as certain; at leaſt, as by far the moſt probable. If Edwy had only kept a miſtreſs, it is well known, that there are methods of accommodation with the church, which would have prevented the clergy from proceeding to ſuch extremities againſt him: But his marriage, contrary to the canons, was an inſult on their authority, and called for their higheſt reſentment.

NOTE

NOTE [C], p. 120.

MANY of the Engliſh hiſtorians make Edgar's ſhips amount to an extravagant number, to three thouſand or three thouſand ſix hundred. Brompton ſays, that Edgar had four thouſand veſſels. How can theſe accounts be reconciled to probability, and to the ſtate of the navy in the time of Alfred? W. Thorne makes the whole number amount only to three hundred, which is more probable. The fleet of Ethelred, Edgar's ſon, muſt have been ſhort of one thouſand ſhips; yet the Saxon Chronicle ſays it was the greateſt navy that ever had been ſeen in England.

NOTE [D], p. 140.

ALMOST all the ancient hiſtorians ſpeak of this maſſacre of the Danes as if it had been univerſal, and as if every individual of that nation throughout England had been put to death. But the Danes were almoſt the ſole inhabitants in the kingdoms of Northumberland and Eaſt Anglia, and were very numerous in Mercia. This repreſentation, therefore, of the matter is abſolutely impoſſible. Great reſiſtance muſt have been made, and violent wars enſued; which was not the caſe. This account given by Wallingford, though he ſtands ſingle, muſt be admitted as the only true one. We are told, that the name *Lurdane*, *lord Dane*, for an idle lazy fellow, who lives at other people's expenſe, came from the conduct of the Danes, who were put to death. But the Engliſh princes had been intirely maſters for ſeveral generations; and only ſupported a military corps of that nation. It ſeems probable, therefore, that it was theſe Danes only that were put to death.

NOTE [E], p. 163.

THE ingenious author of the article Godwin, in the Biographia Britannica, has endeavoured to clear the memory of that nobleman, upon the ſuppoſition, that all the Engliſh annals had been falſified by the Norman hiſtorians

hiſtorians after the conqueſt. But that this ſuppoſition has not much foundation, appears hence, that almoſt all theſe hiſtorians have given a very good character of his ſon Harold, whom it was much more the intereſt of the Norman cauſe to blacken.

NOTE [F], p. 172.

THE whole ſtory of the tranſactions between Edward, Harold, and the duke of Normandy, is told ſo differently by the ancient writers, that there are few important paſſages of the Engliſh hiſtory liable to ſo great uncertainty. I have followed the account which appeared to me the moſt conſiſtent and probable. It does not ſeem likely, that Edward ever executed a will in the duke's favour, much leſs that he got it ratified by the ſtates of the kingdom, as is affirmed by ſome. The will would have been known to all, and would have been produced by the Conqueror, to whom it gave ſo plauſible, and really ſo juſt a title; but the doubtful and ambiguous manner in which he ſeems always to have mentioned it, proves that he could only plead the known intentions of that monarch in his favour, which he was deſirous to call a will. There is indeed a charter of the Conqueror preſerved by Dr. Hickes, where he calls himſelf *rex hereditarius*, meaning heir by will; but a prince, poſſeſſed of ſo much power, and attended with ſo much ſucceſs, may employ what pretence he pleaſes: It is ſufficient to refute his pretences to obſerve, that there is a great difference and variation among hiſtorians, with regard to a point which, had it been real, muſt have been agreed upon by all of them.

Again, ſome hiſtorians, particularly Malmeſbury and Matthew of Weſtminſter, affirm that Harold had no intention of going over to Normandy, but that taking the air in a pleaſure-boat on the coaſt, he was driven over by ſtreſs of weather to the territories of Guy count of Ponthieu: But beſides that this ſtory is not probable in itſelf, and is contradicted by moſt of the ancient hiſtorians, it is contradicted by a very curious and authentic

monument lately diſcovered. It is a tapeſtry, preſerved in the ducal palace of Roüen, and ſuppoſed to have been wrought by orders of Matilda, wife to the emperor: At leaſt it is of very great antiquity. Harold is there repreſented as taking his departure from king Edward in execution of ſome commiſſion, and mounting his veſſel with a great train. The deſign of redeeming his brother and nephew, who were hoſtages, is the moſt likely cauſe that can be aſſigned; and is accordingly mentioned by Eadmer, Hoveden, Brompton, and Simeon of Durham. For a farther account of this piece of tapeſtry, ſee Hiſtoire de l'Academie de Literature, tom. ix. p. 535.

NOTE [G], p. 193.

IT appears from the ancient tranſlations of the Saxon annals and laws, and from king Alfred's tranſlation of Bede, as well as from all the ancient hiſtorians, that *comes* in Latin, *alderman* in Saxon, and *earl* in Dano-Saxon, were quite ſynonimous. There is only a clauſe in a law of king Athelſtan's which has ſtumbled ſome antiquaries, and has made them imagine that an earl was ſuperior to an alderman. The weregild, or the price of an earl's blood, is there fixed at fifteen thouſand thrimſas, equal to that of an archbiſhop; whereas that of a biſhop and alderman is only eight thouſand thrimſas. To ſolve this difficulty we muſt have recourſe to Selden's conjecture (ſee his Titles of Honour, chap. v. p. 603, 604.), that the term of earl was in the age of Athelſtan juſt beginning to be in uſe in England, and ſtood at that time for the atheling or prince of the blood, heir to the crown. This he confirms by a law of Canute, § 55. where an atheling and an archbiſhop are put upon the ſame footing. In another law of the ſame Athelſtan the weregild of the prince or atheling is ſaid to be fifteen thouſand thrimſas. He is therefore the ſame who is called earl in the former law.

NOTE

NOTE [H], p. 252.

THERE is a paper or record of the family of Sharneborne, which pretends, that that family, which was Saxon, was reſtored upon proving their innocence, as well as other Saxon families which were in the ſame ſituation. Though this paper was able to impoſe on ſuch great antiquaries as Spelman and Dugdale, it is proved by Dr. Brady to have been a forgery; and is allowed as ſuch by Tyrrel, though a pertinacious defender of his party notions. Ingulf tells us, that very early Hereward, though abſent during the time of the conqueſt, was turned out of all his eſtate, and could not obtain redreſs. William even plundered the monaſteries. We are told by Ingulf, that Ivo de Taillebois plundered the monaſtery of Croyland of a great part of its land, and no redreſs could be obtained.

NOTE [I], p. 253.

THE obliging of all the inhabitants to put out the fires and lights at certain hours, upon the ſounding of a bell, called the *courfeu*, is repreſented by Polydore Virgil as a mark of the ſervitude of the Engliſh. But this was a law of police, which William had previouſly eſtabliſhed in Normandy. The ſame law had place in Scotland.

NOTE [K], p. 260.

WHAT theſe laws were of Edward the Confeſſor, which the Engliſh, every reign during a century and a half, deſire ſo paſſionately to have reſtored, is much diſputed by antiquaries, and our ignorance of them ſeems one of the greateſt defects in the ancient Engliſh hiſtory. The collection of laws in Wilkins, which paſs under the name of Edward, are plainly a poſterior and an ignorant compilation. Thoſe to be found in Ingulf are genuine; but ſo imperfect, and contain ſo few clauſes favourable to the ſubject, that we ſee no great reaſon for their contending for them ſo vehemently.

It is probable, that the Engliſh meant the *common law*, as it prevailed during the reign of Edward; which we may conjecture to have been more indulgent to liberty than the Norman inſtitutions. The moſt material articles of if were afterwards comprehended in Magna Charta.

NOTE [L], p. 284.

HIST. Elyenſis, p. 516. The words of this hiſtorian, who is very ancient, are remarkable, and worth tranſcribing. *Rex itaque factus Willielmus, quid in principes Anglorum, qui tantæ cladi ſupereſſe poterant, fecerit, dicere, cum nihil proſit, omitto. Quid enim prodeſſet, ſi nec unum in toto regno de illis dicerem priſtina poteſtate uti permiſſum, ſed omnes aut in gravem paupertatis ærumnam detruſos, aut exhæredatos, patria pulſos, aut effoſſis oculis, vel cæteris amputatis membris, opprobrium hominum factos, aut certe miſerrime afflictos, vita privatos. Simili modo utilitate carere exiſtimo dicere quid in minorem populum, non ſolum ab eo, ſed a ſuis actum ſit, cum id dictu ſciamus difficile, et ob immanem crudelitatem fortaſſis incredibile.*

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